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TENSIONS IN POLAND

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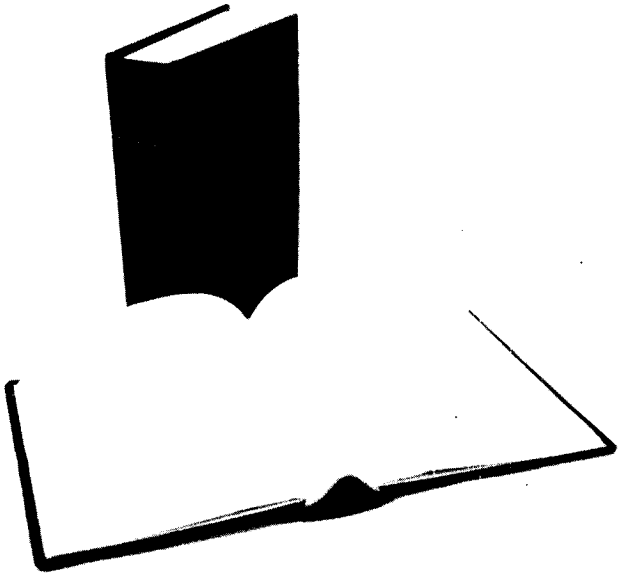

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Hans F. Sennholz

TENSIONS IN POLAND

THE WORKERS' REVOLT in Poland raises momentous questions not only about the future of communism as a political-economic system, but also on its many implications for the West. Does it signal a terminal ideological crisis that in due time will bring about changes in communist thought and practice? Is it shaking the foundation of communism as a system of political rule and oppression? Is it damaging the engine of Soviet power and influence? And how can and should the West respond to the proletarian revolution in Poland? The answers may be found in the thoughts and aspirations of the Polish workers who are voicing their frustrations about the economic order and the humiliating role they are playing in that order. In final analysis, we must search for our answer in diverse political and economic philosophies that are creating insoluble tensions and conflicts.

Communism is the most extreme form of totalitarianism. It is the root and prototype of all others, such as Nazism and Fascism that sprang from it. Since the destruction of German Nazism it is the only surviving power that constitutes a real danger to the West. In fact, it is far more dangerous than its other variations ever have been because, at this very moment, it is conquering the hearts and minds of millions of people around the globe. For Nazism and Fascism it was surely a difficult task to convince the peoples of Africa or Asia of the superiority of the Aryan

Dr. Sennholz heads the Department of Economics at Grove City College in Pennsylvania. He's a noted writer and lecturer on economic, political and monetary affairs, and in this article recurs to the theme of his book, *How Can Europe Survive?*, published in 1955 but now out of print.

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race or the rejuvenation of the Roman Empire. But it is rather easy to indoctrinate them with the slogans and potions of communism.

Subjugating and Sacrificing the Individual to the State

Communism bears little resemblance to the despotic regimes of kings and dictators who continue to make their brief appearances in many parts of the world. It is totalitarian, all-comprising, subjugating the individual and sacrificing him to the State. It is the total politicization of life that permits no exceptions or limits, no sphere without the state. It is a secularized faith, a religiously fervent atheism. (The writings of Alexander Solzhenitsyn are a living memorial to the untold millions of Soviet victims.)

It is built on the socialistic economic order. Economic life hinges around the omnipotent and sovereign center that can tolerate neither private property in production nor individual enterprise. Every economic transaction becomes a political transaction that aims to sustain the omnipresent state. Every trade is used to strengthen the regime and, if at all possible, to weaken the capitalistic world. Its lack of prices and markets makes it a chaotic system that stumbles through waste and corruption, from crisis to crisis.

If it were not for the capitalistic production structure and Western technology that are copied or imported, the Soviet economic order would operate in utter darkness, unable to sustain its hapless population. In fact, living conditions in the Soviet Union that always have been on the level of underdeveloped countries have worsened considerably in recent years. Death rates are rising for almost every age group. There is not a country in Europe in which individual lives are so short and children's death rates so high as in the Soviet Union.

People Try to Escape

Wherever communism comes to power, a peculiar law of population and trade takes effect: the people seek to escape wherever and whenever they can; but the authorities forcibly keep them in the country by means of high walls and barbed wire, mine fields, tanks and machine guns. While many individuals lose their lives in desperate attempts to escape, a few succeed every day in reaching safety in the capitalistic West.

The flow of goods proceeds in the opposite direction, from the capitalistic countries to communist areas. They flow as alms or extortions, through lies or deception, or as the result of credits and loans that are repayable in the distant future.

The communist economies are straining and reaching the breaking point in a desperate effort to sustain

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the ruling class and build a powerful military machine. While the masses of people under communist rule linger in hopeless poverty, a bloated state bureaucracy enjoys all the perquisites and privileges the system can provide. The manifest disparity between the lifestyle of the working population and that of the party establishment is a source of chronic discontent. Despite all the impudent boasts of the Soviet leaders, there is no hope whatever that socialism will ever provide the amenities of life to which the working people in the capitalistic countries are accustomed.

And yet, two circumstances come to mind that may actually give substance and truth to the communist boasts. If the West, in utter blindness and stupidity, were to destroy its own economic order by adopting the methods and policies of socialism, or by ravishing its own productivity through currency and credit destruction, the West may actually sink to Soviet levels. Moreover, if the West, for any reason, were to transfer its productive capital and technological know-how to the Soviets and modernize communist production along capitalistic lines, new life could be imparted to the barren system.

It is an undeniable fact that in incredible blindness the West actually has moved in this direction, giving new hope and comfort to world communism. It has severely weakened its own currency and credit structure through rampant inflation and extended massive loans and credits to the Soviet Empire.

The West Is Financing Soviet Oppression

In recent years, mostly since 1970, Western governments and financial institutions loaned the Soviet bloc countries at least $88 billion. According to some estimates that include the credits granted by suppliers and other lenders, this amount may actually exceed $113 billion. The West is bailing the socialistic countries out of their inherent difficulties through massive transfusions of capital. It is buying the bread for the restive masses and capitalist technology for socialized industries.

Why are we propping up the socialistic economies and their dictatorial regimes? Three factors may have contributed to this awful blunder: Western ignorance about the nature of communism; rampant inflation, especially in the U.S., that triggered the outflow of funds to all corners of the world; and, finally, Western euphoria about detente.

It is gross ignorance to view the relationship of a communist government and its people as normal and healthy. Communist governments are not the representatives of the people, and the people are not the constituency of the government.

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When we are dealing with communist officials we are not dealing with the people, but with the political agents of a monolithic apparatus of oppression that lacks any legitimate claim to represent the people. To grant a loan to a communist state is to join cause with the oppressors, to see them through their difficulties and preserve intact the dictatorship, which the people are risking their lives to dismantle. And yet, in their incredible confusion the big banks in the capitalist West, encouraged and goaded by equally confused government officials, supported the regimes to the tune of $88 billion or more.

Banks Pressed to Invest

Surely the banks were under severe pressure to invest huge funds rolling off the printing presses and credit systems of their respective governments. The 1970s were years of rampant inflation as Western governments were indulging in massive deficit spending that was financed primarily by currency and credit expansion. Commercial banks were the happy depositories of these new funds that needed to be invested securely and profitably.

To the eager bankers it was a pleasant coincidence that the communist governments were ready to receive those funds in large and convenient blocs. Moreover, the banks were obliged to "recycle" the massive influx of O.P.E.C. petrodollars that were flowing from the oil-consuming countries to Arab producers and back to commercial banks in the consuming countries. Some deposits found their way from the banks to the national treasuries that spent them on massive deficit schemes. Third World countries in Africa and Asia managed to borrow a total of $365 billion, the communist countries no less than $88 billion. Of course, this grant of loans constituted a huge transfer of real wealth from the capitalist West to socialist and communist governments all over the globe. It sustained and supported the oppressors and mortal enemies of capitalism at a rate and magnitude unprecedented in history.

Moscow Continues Psychological War Against the West

The euphoria that followed the detente blinded many Western leaders. Although Moscow continued its psychological warfare with all available methods, aiming at the political attrition of the capitalist West, Western neutralists and appeasers rejoiced about the detente and eagerly promoted the wealth transfer. The Kremlin continued to wage its war at alternating fronts, either psychological or economical, or military, or all together; the West simply disregarded the challenge and acted as if the incessant blows and

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contemptuous injuries simply did not exist.

By now the banks probably have come to realize the full meaning of lending to the Soviet bloc. But it is too late for them. The Communist debt has long since passed the point at which it could simply be written off. The magnitude exceeds by far the banks' capital and surplus, the loss of which would bring instant ruin and bankruptcy. As they cannot cut their losses they are likely to make every effort to protect their old loans through new loans. As long as they finance the interest falling due, they can live by the fiction that the loans are realistic and secure. But the protection of loans implies the protection of the debtors, i.e., the communist states. The banks as creditors thus become partners of the communist debtors and the loans become political intervention on behalf of the communist regimes. When seen in this light, the $1 billion bank loan extended to the Polish government by West German and American banks during the present crisis is political intervention on behalf of communism.

If the Polish government should default on its debt because Western banks cease to finance it or because the Kremlin decides to rattle the financial structure of the West, the 400–500 billion dollar pyramid of debt built on the ability and willingness to repay may come crashing down on the gullible West. A communist default, which appears inevitable to this observer, would have a domino effect on those debtor countries that have virtually no chance of ever repaying their debts. It is almost certain that sooner or later the Soviets will use this threat of default to gain political concessions from the West.

Subsidizing the Banking System

Given the financial structure of the West and the dominant role of governments in those structures, it is doubtful that such a default would actually crush the debt pyramid. But it probably would alter its color and nature. No Western government would permit its banking system to collapse as a result of foreign default, with the inevitable consequences of severe depression and mass unemployment. Instead, the governments of creditor countries could be expected to issue instant guarantees for the defaulted obligations and thus assume the communist and Third World debt. The crisis would be averted by Western governments through the assumption of another $400–500 billion of debt, which in time would exert its powerful influence toward more inflation and credit expansion in the West. It would contribute its share to the gradual and ultimately total destruction of the world monetary order. Unfortunately, such a de-

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struction would devastate the capitalistic countries without a single shot being fired.

Socialism Has Lost Its Appeal

The Polish workers' revolt reveals the tremendous problems, tensions, and weaknesses of the communist empire. Behind the impudent speeches and boasts of the Soviet rulers lies the hopeless reality of the socialist economy, the misery of living conditions and the despair of millions of people who are chafing under harsh conditions.

The people have to stand in line for hours to buy food that is in scarce supply or for shoes and clothing that are rationed. They walk miles to work—public transportation is most unreliable, and private transportation, except for the bicycle, virtually does not exist. The private automobile lies beyond the reach of most Poles; it is reserved for members of the communist party and the ruling elite. Most amenities of life to which the workers in capitalistic countries are accustomed are not offered by the government distribution system; they may be available on "black markets" that are supplied through countless illegal channels of trade and manufacture. The frustrations that are felt everywhere continue to lead to labor protests and walkouts although, last summer, Polish workers were permitted to join an independent labor union, Solidarity.

The existence of an independent labor union violates the basic structure of monolithic communism and, therefore, is viewed with alarm in the Kremlin. It raises the crucial question of how much decentralization the Soviet system can tolerate and yet be centrally controlled. Does it constitute a serious challenge to the communist empire?

The Anomaly of Unions

To the Western observer the union movement in Poland constitutes a curious fruit of socialist thought that promises protection from employer exploitation—protection through organization and collective bargaining. In the capitalistic West, it is aimed at the private owners of the means of production whose bargaining power is said to exceed by far that of individual workers. In a communistic country that claims to represent a nation of working people, the union movement confronting the communist state obviously contradicts this claim. If a labor union is the legitimate representative of the working people, where then is the legitimacy of the state? By casting serious doubt on the philosophical and moral foundation of the communist state, this question makes the union movement a genuine threat to communism. The union will have to be crushed forcibly, or it will, in time, erode the monolithic nature of communism.

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The Polish workers who courageously confront the state may be dimly aware of the philosophical implications of their challenge, as are most people who labor and suffer under a totalitarian regime. But they are grossly mistaken in their belief that a labor union can actually improve the living and working conditions of the workers.

Rising Productivity Is the Key to Progress

It is an economic error deeply imbedded in popular thought, even in the capitalistic West, that labor unions can raise the wage rates and improve the working conditions of the working population. Only rising productivity can bring this about. A labor union that raises production costs and disrupts production, tends to lower productivity and income. Through coercion or threats of coercion it may allocate larger slices of a shrinking pie to workers with union seniority—always at the expense of junior workers. But it cannot improve the economic conditions of all the people.

The Polish people will have to learn in the coming months that shorter work days, slow-downs and strikes do not raise living standards, but lower them. Economic conditions will deteriorate visibly and markedly because the socialist production order by itself is basically chaotic and unproductive. Adding militant union tactics to socialistic bungling is adding havoc to confusion. Polish standards of living will continue to fall, which may lead to more rebellion and confrontation with the communist state.

The only hope for genuine economic betterment lies in a return to the private-property competitive order, i.e., to capitalism. All means of production would have to be returned to private ownership, and economic production be guided again by costs and prices freely established in competitive markets. But those words cannot be spoken with Soviet commissars lurking around the corner. Moreover, it is doubtful that the Polish workers are thinking in those terms. They are watching with envy the economic conditions in the West where working people are free to unionize and engage in collective bargaining. Because there are unions there are high standards of living, most workers strongly believe, which is a logical error as old as the union movement itself.

Independent Farmers' Union

The drive for Rural Solidarity, an independent farmers' union, adds yet another dimension to the conflict. A consistent communistic order that tolerates no private property in the means of production has no place for independent farmers. It uses farm workers who labor from dawn to dusk

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on government estates or community cooperatives. The very existence of privately owned farms in Poland is a rare exception to the Soviet rule that was suspended temporarily because of transitional difficulties. But the government is asserting its ruthless control through its monopolistic position as the sole buyer of all farm products. It is setting its own prices and forcing farm producers to deliver their output to the state. Disobedience is denounced as "black marketeering" and punished severely and mercilessly.

The farmers' drive for an independent union is an open affront to the communistic order. The farmers' union would want to bargain for higher food prices and the freedom to sell farm produce in open markets. It would press demands that are utterly unacceptable to the holders of communist power. The confrontation is ideological and therefore insoluble. It is all the more menacing to the communistic state as it is supported by the workers' union whose economic interests do not call for higher food prices. The strange alliance of workers' and farmers' union, therefore, is signalling a serious challenge to communistic principle and authority.

What are the motive powers of this challenge? This observer is fully convinced that it is Polish nationalism that is rising in defiance of Russian rule and supremacy.

Nationalism vs. Empire

Nationalism is a guiding principle or creed that permeates political thought and policies throughout the world. It undergirds all modern societies and legitimizes their claim to authority and sovereignty. It makes the nation-state the ideal form of political organization, and provides the framework for social and cultural activities. Unknown before the eighteenth century, it swept through Europe during the nineteenth century and conquered the world as a political ideology during the twentieth.

In its most popular garb nationalism raises the demand for a government of the same ethnic composition as the majority of the citizenry. Its goal is national self-determination, to be separate, independent, and equal to other nations. Seeking "national" or "popular" foundations for cultural and intellectual life, it rejects the supranational and universal elements of social life. Extreme versions of nationalism tend to drown the quest for individual liberty and seek to crush the rights and interests of other people not of the race and language of the majority group. Such has been the primary ideological force that plunged the world into its major wars.

After World War II the spread of nationalism to Africa and Asia brought an end to the European colonial empires and gave birth to a

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great number of national states. The same forces of nationalism are felt in the communist empire, giving rise to conflicting national interests and creating acute tensions that are gnawing at its foundation. Yugoslavia asserted her independence from Soviet Russia as early as 1948. All other satellite countries sought to regain it in vain. The popular uprising in Berlin, the revolt of Pozen, the Hungarian revolution, the Czech rebellion, and now the Polish workers' revolt, all reveal the tremendous tensions and conflicts between the people and their communist masters.

Polish Nationalism

Polish nationalism, which during the 19th century had merely been an upper-class movement and therefore had failed to achieve national independence, is the primary political credo in Poland today. It probably received its impelling force and momentum from the immense suffering which German and Russian nationalism inflicted on many Poles during and after World War II. In 1939, Polish independence was crushed by Nazi Germany and communist Russia, acting in concert, leading to another partition of Poland. During and after the war, more than one-third of the Polish population was driven from its homes and resettled ultimately in formerly German territory that was emptied of German-speaking inhabitants. The suffering inflicted by foreign nationalism has left a deep mark on the present generation of Poles, especially in the resettled areas. It is no coincidence that the workers' revolt started in the Gdansk area and from there quickly spread to Silesia, areas settled by Poles only thirty years ago.

Nationalism is a powerful divisive force in the communist world, a force capable of producing bitter tensions and conflicts. It is resisting the centralization of all power in the Kremlin and preventing it from establishing its deadly uniformity throughout the empire. In the satellite countries it creates a wide rift between the people and the governments which receive their orders from Moscow. The Polish people reject and scorn their own government and the ruling class of communist party members who are catering to their Russian masters.

Growing Tensions of Nationalism Within Soviet Union

The Soviet Union itself consisting of nearly 180 different nationalities and tribes is suffering from growing tensions of nationalism. The Russians or Great Russians, as they are often called, merely comprise some 58 per cent of the Soviet population. Sizable minorities include the Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Georgians, Armenians, Estonians, Latvi-

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ans and Lithuanians, who are praying for their day of deliverance.

When, in 1941, the German armies invaded the Soviet Union, millions of people welcomed the German invaders as their liberators. A volunteer army of Soviet subjects under a former Red Army general, Andrei Vlasov, fought side by side with the Germans to the bitter end. If the German conquest had not been marred by countless Nazi atrocities and the Hitler regime had not proven to be even worse than the Stalin reign, the national minorities might have risen in unison against their Kremlin masters. After the war, four Soviet republics and one national region were dissolved as a punishment for their defection and their inhabitants dispersed over the Union.

Behind the Iron Curtain nationalism probably constitutes the greatest challenge and danger to the communist empire. This is not to deny that in Third-World countries communism and nationalism may become uneasy allies in their attempts at overthrowing the old order. A government with nationalistic ambitions, eager to "liberate" an ethnic group or reclaim "lost territory," may meet resistance by the Western powers, but find eager support by the Soviet Union. The Kremlin encourages and assists the national liberation movement and, whenever successful, reaps its rewards in the extension of Soviet power.

Conquer or Perish

Why are the Soviets so intent upon conquering and extending their sphere of power? Why this unflinching aspiration for unlimited world supremacy?

The communist politicians and sympathizers throughout the world have a ready answer: the need for self-defense. The decaying capitalist democracies, they proclaim, are bent on extending their spheres of exploitation. Russia is merely defending her own independence. Of course, such an answer has justified all aggressions from the beginning of time. Louis XIV and Napoleon, Hitler and Mussolini invaded foreign countries only in self-defense. For the same reason Russia annexed Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia, a province of Czechoslovakia, a part of Finland, a great part of Poland, and Chinese and Japanese territories. Russia created a ring of satellite countries for which it claims exclusive concern and interest. They include the rest of Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Korea and, since December 1979, also Afghanistan. In these countries only "friendly" governments, i.e., puppet communist regimes, are tolerated.

If the U.S.A. were to seek territo-

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rial aggrandizement in Soviet fashion, it would have annexed Canada, Mexico, and Cuba long ago, and converted all other Latin American countries to "friendly" neighbors. But that would be "capitalist imperialism" in communist terminology. When the Soviet Union embarks upon aggression it is "self-defense."

Toward World Revolution

Russia's aggressiveness actually is the poisonous fruit of the communist dogma that the Soviet Union is entrusted by destiny to keep the death watch of capitalism. By laboring toward the final world revolution, the Kremlin is paving the way for the new order. The Russian intelligentsia and many thought leaders who afford strength and support to the regime are flattered by the thought that they are the leaders of the world revolution. They are ready to support the Kremlin as long as the world revolution is advancing and showing promise of final success. To them the spread of communism throughout the world offers cogent proof that Marx and Lenin were right in their foreknowledge of a new order.

The Kremlin, therefore, is under continuous pressure to produce new evidence that communism is on the march and the revolution is proceeding on schedule. It must take ever new initiatives of aggression and launch new attacks in order to retain the vital support of the intelligentsia. Any break in the Kremlin momentum is inviting disillusionment and disapproval. Any setback is threatening the very foundation of the political order. Only unflinching aggression and visible success can appease the Marxian intellectuals.

And yet, reason and virtue have not perished in the satellite countries, nor in Russia itself. To the intelligent and sensitive minds communism has ceased to constitute a faith that satisfies their souls. Many millions of victims of communism tear at the hearts and weigh on the consciences of those who still can feel and think. Other millions of victims who endured sadistic brutality in labor camps are finding their moral strength to resist the darkness. Although still imbued with the doctrines and theories of Marxism or other brands of socialism, many thinkers are rediscovering the intellectual and moral roots of Western civilization. A large number of Russian writers are consciously Christian. To them Christianity is often perceived to be the alternative and main competition to Marxism-Leninism. They are emerging *From Under the Rubble,* as Alexander Solzhenitsyn and a group of intimates describe it in a ringing testament.

When given the opportunity, the great minds of Russia are escaping to the West. The communist regime

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kept in place by brute force is suffering from ideological subversion that is gnawing at the foundation of the empire. The entrenched ruling class of the Soviet Union as well as those in all its satellites have much to fear from their long-suffering subjects. Chronic discontent with working and living conditions are sparking sporadic rebellions. The Polish troubles are an early indication that the Soviet system is weakening in its ideological and moral foundation.

It would be wishful thinking that the communist regime in Poland is about to collapse, pulling down communist rule throughout the world. But it is certain that whatever is happening in Poland is shaking the empire and frightening the Soviet rulers. They may have to call on the Soviet armed forces for their "defensive" service in the name of the socialist world order. But the effectiveness of the armed forces depends on their fidelity and loyalty to a system that is decaying in its core. It is not surprising that the Kremlin is hesitating to order the Red Army to march.

How Can the West Respond?

Recent events in Poland reveal the tremendous tensions and paradoxes of the Soviet system. They manifest again that the empire structure is resting precariously on a decadent foundation that is crumbling bit by bit. When a few thousand desperate slaves are rattling their chains the whole slave plantation must brace itself for an earthquake. The Polish workers who, with incredible courage, are tearing at their shackles, are speaking louder than the gibberish of Marxist-Leninist propaganda that pours from the Kremlin. They may fail in the end because the Red Army may yet hold together in a skirmish with ancient neighbors, the Poles. But their sacrifices may reveal and widen the fractures and ruptures of the whole system. For the final day of liberation they may have to wait a little longer until the whole structure comes tumbling down.

To the West, the Polish unrest may serve as a timely occasion for re-evaluating its basic position and policy. Should we continue to come to the support of the communist states through the transfer of massive capital and modern technology—in return for a few more moments of detente? Should we help the ruling classes of the Soviet empire to weather one crisis after another? Or should we pursue a policy of containment that affords new hope and strength to the countless millions of communist oppression? If we have faith in the intellectual and moral values of the West, the answers are very simple.

The Kremlin leaders are devoting all their energies to the building of armed forces of a size the world has

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never seen before. Counting their numbers many Western observers are despairing, talking about defeat and surrender and preparing for the worst. They are alarmed about our "missile gap," the "fighter gap," the "bomber gap," and so on, which we are urged to bridge at once. All their facts and figures may be true. But they are completely ignoring the moral coefficient that is most important in the determination of who is superior. According to a famous dictum by Clausewitz, we must multiply the military strength of the enemy by his moral coefficient in order to arrive at his strength in battle. That is, we must multiply the Soviet legions by the universal tyranny and oppression of the Soviet system in order to estimate its actual strength. Such a calculation must fill us with new hope and confidence in the ultimate outcome of a collision.

Surely we must not allow ourselves to be lulled to sleep, act cowardly, be confused and indecisive. We must be strong not only politically and militarily, but also intellectually and morally. We must have faith in our values, in the intellectual and moral heritage of the West. ⊕

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

To Gain Respect

HEAVEN knows there is no virtue in bankrupting ourselves as we pour huge revenues into supporting other nations, even allowing them to reduce their own taxes at our expense. They will value this "charity of friends" at precisely nothing. Worse still, it will break their will to earn their own way and undermine their dignity. In the end, our government's dole to them will put them in the almshouse along with us.

By hard work and thrift, integrity, and intelligence under the free, private, competitive enterprise system, the United States grew from a small, poor republic to its present power and economic potential. As a result, our private capital, during the last century, and especially from 1900 on, has gone abroad, bringing with it managerial and technical resources and skills. It has brought to underdeveloped areas all over the earth enormous advantages and such a development as no bureaucrats or governmental agencies ever have or ever could approach.

SPRUILLE BRADEN

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Davis E. Keeler

Natural Law and the American Tradition

LEGAL and political philosophy came to America with the first New England colonists. These Puritans were not concerned with politics itself but treated upon it as it was involved with their religious problems. Outside of New England, though the colonists were also taken up in the problems of establishing governments and framing laws, there was virtually no writing dealing with the philosophy of politics or laws.

In those first years, the Puritan conception of law was quite clear: the only true law was that of God's making. It was only when the rules of man were based squarely on the revealed will of God that they attained the dignity of law. The concept of natural law was completely absorbed in divine law. An English lawyer in Boston wrote in 1642 that the colonial tribunals ignored English Common law and sought to administer Mosaic law.

Although the colonies did not produce legal philosophy, they avidly consumed the two monumental writers of English law: Coke and Blackstone.

Lord Coke was a product of the Seventeenth Century, which saw not only the ascendency of the doctrine of natural law as a restriction on the sovereign's relations to his subjects, but in England saw it established

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that there were certain fundamental common law rights which the courts would enforce even against the king. To Lord Coke, the common law limitations on royal authority became natural limitations on all authority; the common law rights of Englishmen became the natural rights of man.

Because of the inexact manner in which the common law was developed and handed down, in his expositions of the content of these natural rights of Englishmen Coke seldom rested solely upon the Magna Carta or other authority but would invariably invoke "common right and reason" to justify his position.

Yet however these rights might be discovered, it is clear that they transcended both parliament and king. In Bonham's Case (1610), Coke said: "And it appears in our books, that in many cases, the common law will control the acts of Parliament, and sometimes adjudge them utterly void; for when an act of Parliament is against common right and reason, or repugnant, or impossible to be performed, the common law will control it and adjudge such an action to be void."

In 1765, William Blackstone published his *Commentaries on the Law* and within a short time he became as well read in America as in England. These quotations are from an American edition published in Philadelphia in 1771: "When the Supreme Being formed the universe and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter from which it can never depart and without which it would cease to be . . . This then is the general significance of law . . . But laws in their more confined sense, and in which it is our present business to consider them, denote rules not of action in general, but of human action . . . that is the precepts by which man . . . endowed with both reason and free will, is commanded to make use of those faculties in the general regulation of his behavior . . . So when He created man . . . He laid down certain immutable laws of human nature . . . and gave him also the faculty of reason to discover the purport of those laws. The Creator . . . has been pleased so to contrive the constitution and form of humanity that we should want no other prompter to inquire after and pursue the rule of right but our own self-love, that universal principle of action. . . . God has not perplexed the law of nature with a multitude of abstract principles . . . but has graciously reduced the rule of obedience to this one paternal precept that man shall pursue his own true and substantial happiness."

Though Blackstone speaks of the natural liberties and absolute rights of man, he adds a reservation: "I know it is more generally laid down more largely, that acts of Parlia-

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ment contrary to reason are void. But if parliament will positively enact a thing to be done which is unreasonable, I know of no power in the ordinary forms of the Constitution that is vested with the authority to control it."

In that he was right, for in England the Revolution of 1688 had established the supremacy of Parliament and in the Mother Country Lord Coke's fundamental rights of Englishmen could no longer prevail over the will of the legislature.

Whatever reservations Blackstone may have had about the ultimate supremacy of natural rights, they were not shared by the colonists who eagerly consumed Blackstone on the rights of Englishmen and ignored Blackstone on the supremacy of Parliament.

And this was what the Revolution was about. The Declaration of Independence was a statement of these principles. Far from being an extravagant rallying cry for a difficult cause, it was a simple statement of the general political and legal consensus of the colonists. When the infuriated colonists denounced the Stamp Tax and demanded the rights of Englishmen, they were not demanding those rights which Parliament had from time to time granted its subjects but rather those immemorial rights of Englishmen granted by God and manifest in nature which no parliament however representative may take away or alter. ⊕

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Man to Man Justice

IT is in the direction of a more acutely developed sense of individual conscientious responsibility that we must constantly look for any permanent improvement in the ordered general welfare of our society.

It must be remembered that ninety-five percent of the peace, order and welfare existing in human society is always produced by the conscientious practice of man to man justice and person to person charity. When any part of this important domain of personal virtue is transferred to government, that part is automatically released from the restraints of morality and put into the area of conscience-less coercion. The field of personal responsibility is thus reduced at the same time and to the same extent that the boundaries of irresponsibility are enlarged.

CLARENCE MANION, *The Key to Peace*

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William M. Manooglan

UTOPIA LOST:
A Refutation of Human Perfectibility

"When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?"

This biblical verse, *Ecclesiastes* 5:11, was the inspiration of that most famous of anti-utopians, Thomas Robert Malthus, who became a clergyman in the same year (1798) he published his famous *Essay on Population.* Malthusian pessimism will always be flawed by its clumsy and rather foolish predictions on food-producing and birth control technology, but it will always be a powerful tradition because the ultimate refutation of human perfectibility does indeed derive from a theory of human numbers, one which is far more complete than anything conceived in *Ecclesiastes* or elaborated by Malthus. The latter's calculations were generally wrong, but his number-related suspicion of human imperfectibility points in the right direction.

Human numbers increase or decrease. In the strictest logic, every live birth is a tiny step toward the smothering of the world's farmlands in people, just as a lack of births points toward the extinction of the species. Pending the realization of these comparably undesirable extremes, we are left with given societies or nations within which every social phenomenon relates in some way to the "moreness" or "lessness" of its number. Wars, just or unjust, popular or despised, won or lost, always connote some lessening of human numbers; peace implies a certain steady, cautious growth in human numbers which has always been the routine precondition of civilization: more manpower, expanded

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economies, more refined division of labor and leisure, and so on.

But growth is no unmixed blessing any more than is depopulation. The deceptively simple truth of the matter is that when a group decides to increase its numbers it collectively moves away from the advantages and disadvantages of demographic sparsity and toward the blessings and curses of growth. From the beginning of time we have stood in crowded cities and yearned for the peace of the countryside, then fretted on lonely farms in nostalgia for the human beehive of the city.

But a specifically mathematical truth stands behind this casual observation: *We simultaneously desire two demographic conditions, contraction and dilation, which cannot simultaneously occur.* Whether it is increasing or decreasing in number, every human society is moving toward one set of desiderata and away from another. The human group can dilate or contract toward one and only one set of universal human goals at a single given time. Man is demographico-mathematically imperfect and imperfectible.

A second, more informal way to consider human imperfectibility is the best preparation for a direct and definitive refutation of history's most revered utopians, Plato and Marx. It concerns the impossibility of a just deployment of wealth upon the death of a creator of wealth.

At that time, two parties have claims to the wealth: the person's heirs, meaning almost always his children, whose very existence announces population growth; and his government, whose very existence is justified by the prevention or minimalization of crises which diminish human numbers (wars, climatic catastrophes, and the like). Neither claim is perfectly just, since neither the heirs nor the government's tax collectors have made the same innovations, taken the same risks or performed the same labor which created the wealth. But neither claim is completely refutable, either.

A Dilemma

The growth claimant, the heir, is correct to point out that he is genetically and geographically closer to the decedent, and the latter does almost always prefer his own sons and daughters as beneficiaries; but the non-growth claimant, the government, is also correct in pointing out that its power provided the creator of wealth with the physical security indispensable to the orderly creation of prosperity and innovation. Certainly, if society were perfectible, a perfect method of doing something so simple as assigning wealth upon the death of its creator would be possible or at least conceivable. It is not.

The hereditary conveyance of wealth has frustrated utopian

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thinkers for thousands of years, and for good reason: even a "perfect" state has to begin somewhere, and begin equally for everyone, but everywhere the utopian turns he sees that inheritances "aggravate" the inequalities of wealth and position which make utopia seem so unattainable. It is no wonder that almost all believers in human perfectibility call for an end to the bequeathing of wealth to heirs. Plato and Marx are not exceptions.

In all of political theory it is difficult to find two more dissimilar political thinkers than the most famous ancient and the most famous modern utopians. What could the patrician Athenian visionary, steeped in literature, music and athletics, have in common with the sarcastic German journalist, arch-materialist and agitator? The simple answer is a common call for the end of individual inheritances.

Toward the end of the *Communist Manifesto,* Marx and Engels present ten points toward the communization of society. Point three reads succinctly enough: "Abolition of all right of inheritance."[1]

Plato seems wiser and therefore far less optimistic about sweeping away the very essence of the human family by mere fiat. He knows that to eliminate or, more realistically, to minimize the effects of the hereditary conveyance, one must hack at its deepest roots without fear or favor. The fifth book of the *Republic* does just that, and the lives of the elite guardians of the Platonic state are regulated not only before their birth, but before their conception: "The number of weddings is a matter which must be left to the discretion of the rulers, whose aim will be to preserve the average of population."[2] The future guardians, "offspring of the good parents," will never know these parents. Anonymous nurses "will provide for their nurture, and will bring the mothers to the fold when they are full of milk, taking the greatest possible care that no mother recognize her own child."[3] The hereditary conveyance of wealth within a family of guardians will be abolished because the guardians will know no family at all.

Declining Population

It is of course beyond the scope of this article to refute Plato or Marx line by line, volume by volume. The point is that this is unnecessary to our logic, since neither system has passed the first and most important test of any social blueprint, pragmatic or utopian: is the proposed government one under which human beings will consistently continue to increase their numbers (i.e., have three or more children) or at least maintain them (by having two)? In logical sequence, no other issue is reached if the answer to this ques-

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tion is negative. Even utopia needs people, and even the slightest and most well-intentioned interference with the hereditary conveyance of wealth can induce catastrophic demographic declines, as shall be seen below. If no one in a state works for the long-range enrichment of anyone but the state, human reproduction becomes a form of tribute to the state and to its majority politicians, and human numbers eventually shrink in retaliation.

Perhaps most importantly, neither Plato nor Marx in all their voluminous works ever bothers to address the ultimate question: how do you make the state everyone's heir without giving its politicians an ominous vested interest in the death of their most productive and wealthy citizens? A private heir is virtually always forbidden by the state from killing his future benefactor to hurry his inheritance, but who will forbid the forbidder? Stalin's murder of millions of relatively wealthy Russian peasants has been denounced even in the communist world, but it is an inescapable result of Marx's and Engels' explicit and absolute hostility to the hereditary conveyance, their implicit rejection of the only conditions under which human populations seem to consent to maintain themselves.

But what historical evidence can be cited to support the thesis that the freedom to bequeath wealth to one's children is the necessary precondition of demographic growth and national survival? Utopias, by definition, can never be wholly refuted by history because they can never be totally placed in the arena of historical reality. But certain policies based on utopian assumptions always seem to manage to creep into the histories of the most innovative nations, provoking anti-utopian reactions, like the depopulation of France under its inheritance law, which confirm our demographic logic.

Trouble in France

Almost consistently from the days of Caesar to the late nineteenth century, France was the most populous nation in western Europe and therefore the society most likely to risk social experiment within the security which only superior numbers can provide. Then, relatively suddenly, its population growth stalled and virtually ceased. Aggravated, of course, by the First World War, deaths in France exceeded births during the 1930s. The country which had been almost five times as populous as Spain in the latter's golden age and over twice as peopled as Victorian Britain in the nineteenth century fell behind the Italians, the British and above all the Germans in population, virtually assuring German domination of Europe until 1945. Even today, under many government programs to increase French

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population, France has twice the territory of West Germany and is in many ways richer, but cannot match German economic performances. What had happened?

In 1793, the French revolutionary legislature, the Convention, abolished primogeniture, the feudal law which directed the estates of persons toward their first-born child. This abolition of a restriction on the hereditary conveyance was consistent with demographic growth and therefore correct, but the Convention did not proclaim the right of all persons to bequeath what they want to whom they want. It replaced the feudal directive with a far more extensive one by mandating that all property must be willed in equal shares to all legitimate and acknowledged illegitimate children. Napoleon incorporated this principle into his Code Civil, and it remained the law throughout the turbulent nineteenth century, blissfully untouched by "liberal" and "conservative" governments alike. The Germans and British had no such law, and generally allowed the freedom to bequeath. A popular historian sums it up concisely:

> This legislation had important results, moral and economic: reluctant to condemn their heirs to poverty by periodic divisions of the patrimony among many children, the French cultivated the old arts of family limitation. The peasants remained prosperous, but the population of France grew slowly during the nineteenth century—from 28 million in 1800 to 39 million in 1914, while that of Germany rose from 21 to 67 million. Prospering on the land, French peasants were slow to move into towns and factories; so France remained predominantly agricultural, while England and Germany developed industry and technology, excelled in war, and dominated Europe.[5]

In 1911, a great French demographer cried out against France's depopulation and inheritance laws:

> Few know it! Hardly anyone thinks of it! The French see their country's suicide without attempting a thing to prevent it. The death of France, which will be one of the major events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, astonishes foreigners and leaves us indifferent![6]
>
> We have seen that in all the major countries of the world, legislation is designed to reconcile man's two most natural ambitions: the desire to survive himself in his wealth and work, and the desire to survive himself in his children. In France, the law prevents the conciliation of these two ambitions; it forces a man to choose, and experience proves that he makes the choice most harmful to his country: he sacrifices the conservation of his nation to the preservation of his family wealth.[7]

If even this subtle restriction on the hereditary conveyance—French revolutionary legislators might have almost been justified in calling it a *theoretical* extension of it to younger siblings—could result in the demographic eclipse of the most peopled

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and powerful state in Western Europe, what would an outright abolition of the conveyance do to an otherwise "perfect" state? The younger children which the French law was designed to protect were never born and never lent their economic productivity or their military manpower to the task of holding back the prolific, prosperous Germans. The statist, utopian assumption in all this is that people are so perfectly subservient to the state that they will have many children and create much wealth for their government regardless of its attitude toward the physical and economic continuity of family life. People are not and they do not.

Depopulating the Soviet Union

Revolutionary France has not been the only demographic colossus committed to utopianly naive restrictions on the freedom to bequeath. Marxist orthodoxy, as we have seen, envisions not merely a restriction on, but a total abolition of private inheritances. Accordingly, Marx and Engels are depopulating (and de-Europeanizing) the Soviet Union just as French revolutionary naivete penalized France. The Great Russian ethnic majority which stabilized the identity of tsarist Russia has disappeared under the communists; Stalin's genocides and wars have left catastrophic deficits of males; and infant mortality is skyrocketing to such an extent that China can seriously relish the possibility of an end to Soviet population growth.

Two American demographers, basing their study only on figures put out by the Soviets themselves, have concluded that the average Soviet woman has from six to eight abortions in her lifetime.[8] Soviet feminists claim that the figure is closer to ten,[9] with the inevitable probability of uterine damage. Infant mortality is up to the levels of underdeveloped countries and Soviet life expectancy, having risen impressively in the 1950s, is edging down.[10] Western experts on Soviet affairs are astounded at this "health crisis" and cite alcoholism and health expenditure cutbacks, but these factors could be more of an effect than a prime cause of sagging familial morale in the U.S.S.R.

Breaking Family Ties

The overall problem is that a still theoretically utopian Soviet state, despite tacit concessions to the reality of minor family possessions staying within a family, remains faithful to Marx's and Engels' suppression of the essence of familial continuity, the hereditary conveyance. The Kremlin is reputed to be coldly realistic, but what more urgently real duty do the Soviets face than the peopling of that immensely rich Siberia which faces a billion hostile Chinese, and how can this crucial

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goal be achieved with the average Soviet woman undergoing at least half a dozen governmentally performed abortions during her childbearing years? The U.S.S.R. has already become predominantly Asian in population: how can it best resist the Asian nation par excellence, a China with Marxist pretensions of its own?

"The Sixties and Seventies have proved devastating to Soviet society," writes demographer Nick Eberstadt.[11] And indeed they have, but did not the Soviets enjoy a certain demographico-economic growth up until that time? The growth-indifferent communist state could spur its people to grow when its patriotism could point to Japanese or German militarism or to the fact that only the United States had the power of nuclear attack. But those days are gone forever, and when did they leave for good? At the dawn of the devastating sixties and seventies.

Soviet citizens are now free to see that the most dangerously self-deluded opponent of their familial continuity is not Hitler, but communism itself, as freely expressed in the 1848 *Manifesto*. Once the Soviets became a nuclear superpower, their leadership lost its most precious or perhaps its only tool for persuading the Soviet family to grow: Russian nationalism and military vulnerability. Soviet women will bear children to defend the "motherland of socialism" but not to prove the utopian theses of two nineteenth century German pseudo-scientists.

So it is that most utopias may be generally defined as the fruits of an intolerance for the hereditary transmission of wealth, an intolerance which, once international circumstances calm down long enough for families to take stock of it, provokes the disastrous retaliation of depopulation. The Soviets must repudiate Point Three of the *Communist Manifesto* or continue to face a demographic decline of incalculable consequences for the whole world. If the demographic decline of France opposite Germany was the most ominous event of the nineteenth century, the de-Europeanization and slow population growth of Soviet Russia is among the most disconcerting phenomena of the twentieth.

Beneficiaries of Great Wealth Often Oppose Such Transfers

Along with this new definition of utopianism as an assault on hereditary transmissions of wealth should come some theory of who the serious opponents of family wealth are. They could be anyone, but the deliciously paradoxical fact of the matter is that some of the most famous ones were the direct beneficiaries of great, unearned family wealth. At the very beginning of Plato's Republic, Socrates asks Cephalus whether the latter's wealth is self-acquired or in-

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herited, and rejoices upon learning that it is inherited:

> . . . the makers of fortunes have a second love of money as a creation of their own, resembling the affection of authors for their own poems, or of parents for their children, besides that natural love of it for the sake of use and profit which is common to them and all men. And hence they are very bad company, for they can talk about nothing but the praises of wealth.[12]

This passage fits in well with evidence indicating that Plato was of a patrician family and his leisurely, rambling dialogues the fruit of more leisure than any ordinary person could afford in his day. As to Marx and Engels we are far better informed. They shared not only friendship and a belief in "scientific" human perfectibility, but a common source of income, the Engels family fortune:

> To support both himself and Marx, [Engels] accepted a subordinate position in the offices of Ermen & Engels [senior] in Manchester, eventually becoming a full fledged partner in the concern. He again functioned successfully as a businessman, never allowing his communist principles and criticism of capitalist ways to interfere with the profitable operations of his firm. Hence he was able to send money to Marx constantly, often in the form of five pound notes but later in far higher figures. When Engels sold his partnership in the business in 1869, he received enough for it to live comfortably until his death in 1895 and to provide Marx [who died in 1883] with an annual grant of 350 pounds, with a promise of more to cover all contingencies.[13]

Birthrights Rejected

The point is not, certainly, that a social thinker has to inherit great wealth in order to mount a utopian attack on the very conveyance which enriched him, but it could hardly be a coincidence that the two most famous and revered assaults on family wealth have come from among the heirs most gorged on its benefits. Dynastically wealthy persons constitute less than one per cent of all the humans who have ever lived, yet they have produced most, perhaps almost all of the utopian social blueprints which have distracted mankind from the real task of improving, not "perfecting" society. Nor is it being said here that major heirs are absent from the ranks of libertarian, individualistic thinkers: the task is not to predict the *future* political behavior of the dynastically wealthy, but to classify and analyze their *past* thoughts and attitudes as well as the nature of the political majorities which have accepted them as leaders.

Finally, it should always be remembered that dynastic wealth is virtually never a political factor outside of the world's wealthiest nations because only the latter produce politically significant amounts of it. It is in the Germany and Britain of

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Marx and Engels, the America of Franklin Roosevelt, or the France of Jean-Paul Sartre that the partisan functions of family wealth must be sought. Did not Sartre, France's most eminent twentieth century Marxist, admit that his mother once paid about $24,000 in taxes for him?[14]

The material poverty of a Lenin or a Mao Tse-tung disproves none of all this: penniless terrorists have always sought justification with the economically illiterate rich, who, like them, are too small a group to impose utopia and tyrannize the masses alone. The inescapable conclusion is that the most popular enemies of free market economies are those who never had to enter those economies on their own in the first place.

A Theory of Marxist "Progress"

From this principle a very logical theory of Marxist "progress" can be induced. It derives not from any socialist logic, but from the successes of free market economies: as more wealth is created by productive people like Engels' father and his workers, more direct and indirect heirs like Marx and Engels are free to denounce the market logic which enriched their fathers and themselves. This is inevitably most evident in the recent history of the nation which has produced more anesthetizing dynastic wealth than any other in history, the United States, whose floundering welfare state is of course the creation of its most politically successful heir to great wealth, Franklin Roosevelt.

But the American experiment is beyond the scope of this indictment of human perfectibility, and rightfully so, for the heartbeat of our constitutional government, the separation of powers, is specifically anti-utopian: if the framers of the Constitution had been naive enough to think a single individual (philosopher king) or group (the urban proletariat) perfectible, they would not have perpetually separated the powers of demographico-economic growth, which are legislative in nature, from the executive power whose legitimate functions derive from and should be limited to the real or imminent emergencies which lessen human numbers. This institutionalized mistrust between legislators and the executive can minimize human greed and arrogance because it concedes that they exist. All governmental schemes which reject the separation of powers are doomed to be devoured by the selfishness and imperfectibility they deny.

So it is that our demographically based logic does not refute "scientific" utopia and leave nothing in its place. American history, before the 1930s at least, is the most real refutation of utopia, but also the proof that man has a choice between pursuit of an impossible perfection and the cynicism which would deny "im-

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provability." The United States, apparently bent on returning to the "growthist" ideals which made it great, and the self-depopulating Soviet Union respectively illustrate the Greek pun through which the jesting Thomas More gave utopia its name: the "good place" *(eutopos)* opposed to the "noplace" *(outopos)* of utopian pseudo-science.

—FOOTNOTES—

[1]"The Communist Manifesto," in *Capital and Other Writings,* Modern Library Edition, page 342.

[2]*The Republic,* translated by B. Jowett; Modern Library Edition, page 183.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]Premier Edouard Daladier, "Rapport au President de la Republique," 1939, quoted in *Politics and Society in Contemporary France,* edited by Eric Cahm, 1970; pages 484–485.

[5]Will Durant, *The Age of Napoleon,* page 125.

[6]Jacques Bertillon, *La Depopulation de la France;* Paris, 1911, page one.

[7]*Ibid.,* page 150.

[8]Christopher Davis, Murray Feschback, "Rising Infant Mortality in the USSR," Bureau of the Census, Series P-95, No. 74, page 13..

[9]*Ibid.*

[10]*Ibid.,* page one.

[11]In reviewing "Rising Infant Mortality in the USSR", *New York Review of Books,* February 19, 1981, page 23.

[12]*The Republic,* translated by B. Jowett; Modern Library Edition, page 7.

[13]Oscar J. Hammen, "Friedrich Engels," *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 1980, Volume 6, pages 859–860.

[14]Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations, X: politique et autobiographie;* Gallimard, Paris, 1976; page 203.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Edmund A. Opitz

SOCIALISM, as mood, theory, and practice, is a result of the material abundance made possible by the industrial revolution. Millions of people had toiled close to the soil for millennia, only to be rewarded by a bare subsistence, at best; at worst by plague and famine. Until the modern era, poverty was hardly more attributed to human arrangements than to cosmic setting; one seemed about as fixed as the other. Generations toiled, fed, bred, and died and, because of the general conviction that such was man's fate, entertained little hope of bettering their circumstances. The expectation of unimaginable progress was released by the revolutionary changes which mark the modern period, a period characterized until recently by expanding political liberty, invention and technology, capitalist production, and relative material abundance. Men ceased to yearn for compensatory delights in the world to come and began to dream of getting their New Jerusalem now in "England's green and pleasant land."

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Dennis L. Peterson

Help Wanted: Laborers

AMONG the old books at the local thrift store I came across a two-volume set entitled *Little Visits with Great Americans*. I scanned the pages, always searching for useful materials to share with my junior high history students. Here was a treasure indeed! I could hardly wait to purchase the find and examine the first-hand accounts of how these several persons had achieved success.

From the yellowed pages of those old books came a handful of recurrent principles which, if applied in our own generation, could produce not only more great men but also an even greater and stronger American nation. Such greats as Thomas Edison, Andrew Carnegie, John Wanamaker, Theodore Roosevelt, John Philip Sousa, Helen Keller, and Philip Armour shouted to American youth through the printed page the requisite characteristics for success and prosperity.

Perhaps the principle or characteristic most often mentioned by these examplars was work—hard, persistent, dedicated work.

Edison: "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."

Armour: "You cannot give the world anything without labor, and there is no satisfaction in anything but labor that looks toward doing this, and does it."

T. Roosevelt: "The ability to work hard is, perhaps, the most valuable aid to success. One can't have much success without it."

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Such talk often is plentiful, but it is seldom transformed into real action. A look into the lives of the men interviewed in those two rummage-sale books, however, revealed that they did possess such desire and character as to enable them to become successes in their specific fields.

For instance, the more than one thousand inventions of Thomas Edison did not come from any exceptional bursts of creative genius or intelligence. Rather, they were the results of long, arduous hours spent with assistants in laboratories.

Edison made hard work a habit. He rose early each day, was scanning the newspapers by 6:30 a.m., and began his labors in the laboratories by 7:30 a.m. In order to direct the 50 to 75 different subjects being researched by his assistants, Edison would often spend his evening hours at home preparing instructions and activities for the next day's work. He did his own share of work in the laboratories, too, spending sometimes as much as 60 hours at a time experimenting with a single problem or idea.

Work to many people is a nasty expletive, something to be avoided at all costs. This is not unusual, for since time began man has been searching for ways to eliminate work. Each of us daily strives to get things accomplished with less effort than before. This is commendable and has led to many great inventions. But the attitude is growing that work is bad.

As a teacher of junior high school students, I become more aware of this growing attitude each school year. Not a few students are forgetting (or were they ever taught?) that school, and life, is made up of work. School work. Seat work. Board work. Written work. Homework.

Labor unions, ostensibly to protect the worker from exploitation, limit the number of hours one may work, or establish a ceiling on the amount one may produce in a given time period.

Government, by increasing taxes to burdensome levels, encouraging inflationary practices, and opening wider the doors of the welfare dole, kills what little incentive many individuals might have. Why work hard if the reward for that effort is confiscated? Why labor when one can make as much from Uncle Sam without working?

These obstacles, coupled with a lazy streak, present workers with a difficult, uphill battle. Despite these enemies, formidable as they seem, each can win his own battle if permitted the freedom to try, to fail or succeed, and to suffer the consequences or reap the benefits of his attempts.

Work is required of man. The first man, Adam, was commanded by God

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after the Great Fall to work: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Genesis 3:19). Since that day work has been man's portion on the earth. Deep within man is placed an innate desire to achieve, an urge to accomplish. The method provided by the Creator for the fulfillment of this urge is work.

Successful men, as we have seen already, recognize the importance of persistent hard work to their achievements. It was said of Andrew Carnegie, the great man of steel, that "he was full of the notion of thrift and its twin brother, hard work." The revered Henry Wadsworth Longfellow intoned this principle when he penned:

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.

Work is also fulfilling and satisfying. There is nothing more rewarding than working, sweating, toiling over a task and then gaining the satisfaction of knowing that the job has been completed and that one has done his best. Experiencing such satisfaction is an incentive for further work. Success and accomplishment breed more of the same.

Each of us should think carefully of the words of the one who wrote, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave. . . ." (Ecclesiastes 9:10). The work we have to do, the tasks we have before us, the jobs large and small we would like to see done—all of these things, if they are to be done, must be done now. It is too late after time has stopped for us. As Philip Armour said, "Every man can do something, and there is plenty to do."

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

W. M. Curtiss

NOT many decades past, practically every working hour was required just to provide the food, clothing, and shelter necessary to keep alive. Most people were farmers. There was precious little besides the products of the farm available to families, for the simple reason that eight or nine out of every ten families had to work as hard as they could to feed and clothe the ten families. Specialization? Yes, they had it in a limited way. But today in the United States it requires little more than one family in ten to produce enough food and fiber for all ten families. The other nine families can make television sets, automobiles, household furnishings; they can be teachers, doctors, clergymen, or producers of a host of other goods and services.

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Joseph P. Martino

De-Industrializing the Future

ERNST SCHUMACHER'S 1973 book, *Small Is Beautiful,* popularized the term "appropriate technology." He argued that the purpose of technology is to lighten the burden of work, but modern technology has replaced creative, useful work with fragmented work which the worker does not enjoy. He argued that instead, technology should produce methods and equipment which are: (a) cheap enough so that they are accessible to virtually everyone; (b) suitable for small scale applications; and (c) compatible with man's need for creativity.

The "appropriate technology movement" has grown beyond Schumacher. Many "futurists" have offered definitions which are compatible with Schumacher's ideas, but extend them considerably.

Why should we adopt Appropriate Technology in the industrialized nations? There are several inter-related arguments offered by futurists. These include shortages, changes in the relative scarcity of capital and labor, and the industrial threat to the environment. These lead to a call for "voluntary simplicity." Let's look at each of these arguments.

Shortages

Futurists argue that centralized mass production, mass distribution and mass consumption are based on the availability of large amounts of cheap energy and materials. These

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features of our present society cannot last in the face of energy and materials shortages. Therefore we must alter our lifestyles away from these things.

Several futurists have written that our industrialized society is a historical anomaly, based on the unusual circumstances of cheap energy and abundant resources. According to Ezra Mishan: "The advance of technology in the West over the past 200 years might well be attributable to especially favorable circumstances. Certainly there was no problem up to the present of limits to the assimilative capacity of the biosphere. Nor was there a problem of the availability of cheap fossil fuels."

The argument that industrialization is an anomaly, arising from favorable circumstances, is simply false. This argument is based on failure to recognize what is a natural resource. Whether some material constitutes a natural resource depends on the kind of technology available. In the early 19th century, crude oil which contaminated salt wells was nothing but a nuisance. The coal deposits of England were of no value until the late Middle Ages, when it was realized that coal could be burned. Even then, coal was not important industrially because it was full of impurities which reduced the quality of pig iron smelted with coal. It was not until 1750 that a process was developed which overcame the effects of the coal impurities. Pennsylvania coal was not recognized as a "resource" until even later, since it is a "hard" coal which is harder to ignite than was English "soft" coal. Only in 1828 was a process developed which could use Pennsylvania coal in iron-making.

Thus the apparently "abundant" resources which seem to have been responsible for the growth of industrialization during the 19th and 20th centuries were not even recognized as resources until the beginning of the 19th century. Industrialization succeeded, not because resources were abundant, but because people learned how to convert abundant but useless materials into resources.

Any analysis of industrialization which is based on the assumption that it developed only because of "abundant resources" is suspect. Moreover, if that analysis leads to the conclusion that eliminating industrialization would be a good thing, and that individual freedom should be restricted in order to achieve de-industrialization, the conclusion is even more suspect. In particular, industrialization may continue if presently useless materials can be converted to "resources." The crucial point, however, is not whether industrialization continues. The crucial point is that we do not need to restrict people's freedom in order to de-industrialize.

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Relative Scarcity of Capital and Labor

Another argument is that there will be changes in the relative scarcity of capital and labor. With formerly cheap capital becoming more expensive, and formerly scarce labor becoming more plentiful, capital-intensive industrialization must come to an end. We must therefore alter our lifestyles which are based on capital-intensive industrialization. We will have to adopt lifestyles which are instead based on labor-intensive production processes. These will in general require smaller-scale, decentralized forms of industrial organization.

A stronger form of the same argument calls for Appropriate Technology as a means of increasing employment. It is argued that manufacturing processes utilizing Appropriate Technology require more labor hours and less capital per dollar of output. They thus not only conserve scarce capital but provide more employment than do processes requiring few labor hours per unit of output.

Let us first look at the issue of shifts in the relative scarcity of capital and labor. Has this ever happened before? Is today's shift something unprecedented since the industrial revolution?

In fact, such shifts have been quite common during the past two centuries. The history of American agriculture, during the last half of the Nineteenth Century, involved using technology to allow a worker to farm more and more acres. Land was plentiful and labor was scarce. Between 1840 and 1911 the yield of grain per acre remained almost constant, but the acres per worker grew significantly. Over half the increase in output per worker was due to the increase in acreage per worker through mechanization. In England in the early Nineteenth Century, farmland was in fixed supply and therefore relatively scarce compared to both labor and capital. The English farmers adopted techniques which resulted in greater output per acre, by farming more intensively. During the Napoleonic Wars, however, labor became scarce compared with capital, and farmers shifted to more machines and less labor. When the wars ended, the English farmers shifted back.

Lumber Industries Compared

A comparison of the American and European lumber industries in the 1870s presents the same kind of contrast. In America, labor was scarce and costly. Wood was plentiful. Firms in the lumber and woodworking industry utilized machinery on a large scale to substitute for scarce labor. The result was a great deal of wood "lost" in the production process as sawdust and chips. In Europe, wood was scarce and costly, whereas labor

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was comparatively less costly. The European lumber industry used highly labor-intensive manufacturing techniques which resulted in almost no loss of the wood. One European observer was quoted as describing the American lumber industry as being criminally wasteful of wood. But in fact it was not. The American and European lumber industries were responding to different relative scarcities of labor, capital and materials. In America, industry economized on scarce labor at the expense of plentiful (and renewable) wood. In Europe, industry economized on scarce wood at the expense of more plentiful labor.

These examples show that in different places at the same time, and in the same place at different times, the relative scarcities of labor, capital and materials differed. In response to these differences in relative scarcities, industries employed different production processes. The production processes were always designed to economize on the scarce items at the expense of more plentiful items.

But granted that historically production processes have shifted to follow significant shifts in relative scarcity, what about the idea of increasing employment by utilizing labor-intensive technology? Would we benefit from a deliberate shift in the direction of Appropriate Technology regardless of shifts in relative scarcity of labor, capital and materials?

The notion that labor-saving machinery reduces employment is one of the oldest fallacies known. The Roman Emperor Vespasian is reported to have refused the services of an engineer who offered to transport some huge columns up to the Capitol using a mechanical device. Vespasian stated, "I must always ensure that the working classes earn enough money to buy themselves food."

Bastiat Exposes Fallacy

The French economist Frederic Bastiat offered what is perhaps the strongest refutation of this argument ever written, by presenting an example to show how absurd it is. He described Robinson Crusoe on his island, having to make planks for constructing a shelter. He makes them by cutting down trees, and hewing them flat on two sides. Now, Bastiat says, suppose a plank is washed up on the beach. Should Crusoe salvage it and use it? Not at all. If he salvages the plank, he will be employed only to the extent of walking down to the beach and returning with the plank. However, if he ignores it, he will be employed to the extent of cutting down a tree and hewing another plank out of it. His axe will become dull, so he is assuring himself more employment in sharpening it. He will consume

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food during the time he is manufacturing the plank. Thus he assures himself of more employment in replacing that food. Finally, he can assure himself of yet more employment by walking down to the beach and kicking the plank back into the sea before starting on the manufacture of another one.

When expressed in this way it is clear that Crusoe is not interested in providing himself with employment. He is interested in providing himself with manufactured products. He wants to get them with as little labor as possible. It would be absurd to reject a "gift from the sea," on the grounds that it reduces his employment. But the same holds true for a complex economy. Our interest is not in maximizing the amount of labor done. Our interest is in providing consumers with the goods they want, at the lowest possible cost.

However, the issue of replacing capital-intensive production with labor-intensive production goes deeper than simply the total wealth produced. If capital goods (machines) are deliberately not used, then employment in the machine-tool industry is reduced. Since capital represents the savings of a large number of people, it represents the fruit of their time and labor, diverted to productive purposes instead of consumption. Advocating the replacement of capital with labor is to ignore all the labor and other resources which went into the capital currently being employed. The experience of two centuries of industrialization is that extensive use of capital actually increases total employment. But this is true only if the capital is used efficiently. If capital is used where available labor would actually be cheaper, the total wealth produced is less. Say's Law then comes into play. Since less wealth is produced, there is less to be offered in exchange for the production of others. Thus a demand which might have existed never appears, and employment suffers.

Clearly then the issue is not whether one should emphasize capital intensive manufacturing technology as opposed to labor intensive technology. Neither is right as a matter of policy. The mix of capital and labor which minimizes production cost should be used. Those who emphasize labor intensive manufacturing, that is, more labor intensive than the minimum cost mix, are in fact advocating higher cost production. Or equivalently, they are advocating less production for the same cost, which means a lower standard of living.

Why the Big Deal?

Even granted that energy is going to be more expensive and materials scarcer, why the big deal? Why the fuss over de-industrialization? This sort of shift in relative scarcity of

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the factors of production has taken place before. Whenever it has happened, industrial processes have adjusted without great difficulty. Rather significant differences in relative scarcity have been accommodated at different places in the world, at the same time and therefore with the same level of technological capability. These geographic differences, and the transitions from one configuration of relative scarcity to another have never caused major upheavals in society.

Moreover, we have seen shifts from one major energy source to another within recorded history. Wind, running or falling water, the tides, wood, coal, petroleum, whale oil, and uranium have all been important energy sources at various times and places. The transition from one energy source to another has taken place time and again without major dislocations to either society or the economy.

Saving the Environment

Another argument offered in favor of de-industrialization is that of saving the environment. Phrases such as "soft energy" and "alternate energy" are commonly used. The implication is that "hard energy" is environmentally damaging, while soft energy is benign. Solar energy is offered as the ultimate in soft energy. It is allegedly non-polluting, cost-free, and indefinitely renewable. But as Donald C. Winston has written in *Newsweek*, "Solar energy is potentially the most polluting and ecologically threatening form of commercial power being proposed in the world today." Why does he make such a statement?

Solar energy is said to be democratic, in that it falls on everyone alike. But the reverse side of that coin is that solar energy is dilute. The global average for solar energy intensity, taking into account sun altitude and length of day, is 160 watts per square meter. Taking into account cloud cover and other losses, only about 5 to 10 per cent of this can be converted into electricity. Thus solar energy will be available at about 25 megawatts per square mile. The entire projected power consumption of the U.S. in the year 2000 (assuming continuation of historical growth) would require that an area the size of the state of Oregon be covered with solar collectors. The collectors to replace only existing and projected nuclear power plants would cover the state of West Virginia. Since effective coverage can be only about 50 per cent, to allow workers to have access to the collectors, those areas really should be doubled. But that is only part of the story. There are worse threats to the environment than simply covering vast areas with solar collectors.

Suppose the electricity is to be generated using photovoltaic cells.

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This will require enormous tonnages of cadmium, silicon, germanium, selenium, gallium, copper, arsenic, sulfur, and other exotic materials. The entire 1978 world production of cadmium would suffice only to replace 10 per cent of the world's installed capacity for electricity generation. And the U.S. imports over 60 per cent of its cadmium. Thus not only is this material in extremely short supply worldwide, but the U.S. would be even more dependent upon foreign sources than it is for petroleum.

Unseen Risks

If the electricity is to be generated using thermal conversion, then enormous tonnages of glass, plastics, and rubber will be required for the collectors. In addition, heat transfer fluids such as Freon, ethylene glycol, or liquid metals such as mercury or molten sodium will be required. A Freon spill would do more damage than all the deodorant sprays ever manufactured. A mercury spill would be catastrophic.

Finally, regardless of whichever type of collector is used, it must be produced. That means enormous tonnages of coal or petroleum must be burned; enormous tonnages of ore removed from mines, shipped and processed; and enormous tonnages of pollutants generated in the manufacture of these solar collectors.

But the futurists will claim that they don't want to install enough solar collectors to supply the projected U.S. energy demand. On the contrary, they not only want to keep demand from growing, they want to cut energy consumption below what it is today. If that is done, then the task of building enough solar collectors is reduced significantly.

This is still not a sufficient answer. Even cutting total energy consumption to half of today's level will result in significant environmental damage if it all comes from solar. The critical issue is that despite its apparent advantages, solar energy simply is not benign. Because it is so dilute, collecting it requires a great deal of effort and involves large areas. This alone affects the environment. Using exotic materials only compounds the environmental damage.

Free Sun and Free Coal; The Cost of Using What Is Free

Perhaps the most important point about solar energy is that the de-industrializers are wrong when they call it "free" energy from the sun. Coal under the ground costs no more than does sunlight falling on the ground. No human action is required to produce either one; both are free gifts of nature. The costs for solar energy, just as for coal, are the costs to make that "free" energy usable. Currently, it costs more to make "free" solar energy usable than it

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costs to make "free" coal usable. Moreover, a significant part of the cost of solar energy is environmental damage.

But there is more to this than solar energy. Is it true that industrialization destroys the environment, while non-industrialized societies don't? Let's examine, then, what a world might look like which was based on soft energy and appropriate technology.

In the flood-plains of the Chao Phraya river, north of Bangkok, Thailand, the land appears absolutely flat. Close examination shows that in an important sense it is flatter than any comparable area in the U.S. In most places in the world, even flat-appearing land will be cut up by small watercourses. But in Thailand the creeks, the brooks, the rivulets have all been obliterated. Only the major rivers remain. Hundreds of square miles have been formed, by low earthen dikes, into small rectangular rice-fields. Every drop of rain passes over somebody's rice-field before it reaches a major river.

The countrysides of England and France show the effects of man to the same degree. The hedgerows of Normandy cut the land up into little rectangles just as do the dikes in Thailand, although there is not the same concern with water. The farm plots of England, looking as though they had been manicured, also cover the countryside as far as one can see.

To the casual observer, it may appear as though the residents of these areas are living in a natural setting. The countrysides may appear rustic and pastoral. But in reality the countrysides are man-made structures, as artificial as is Manhattan Island. As Roderick Nash writes in *Next:* "There may be woodsmen in Europe, but there are no *back*woodsmen. The woodcutters and the shepherds of neighboring villages meet at the top of the ridge. The Alps today are a large garden—pastoral, but not wild." He goes on to point out that the same sort of thing is true in Africa and South America. Even though the countrysides may not be as neat-appearing as is the case in Europe, they are dominated and shaped by man.

Even the Most Primitive Cultures May be Man-Made

But the point is that these countrysides, even in Thailand, England and France, were fabricated by people living in a soft-energy, "appropriate technology" lifestyle. In Africa and South America, the fabricated countryside is still inhabited by people living this lifestyle.

Indeed we might be fortunate if a low-technology culture produced merely fabricated landscapes like those of Thailand and Europe. In many parts of the world, primitive

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peoples still practice "slash-and-burn" agriculture. This leads directly to loss of forest cover, destruction of wildlife habitats, erosion of hillsides, and silting-up of rivers. Such a landscape may be truly "fabricated," but it is hardly a desirable one, and it belies the notion that "soft technology" is environmentally benign.

Thus whatever reasons there may be for de-industrializing and reshaping our society into the model offered by "alternative communities," saving the environment isn't one of them. Soft energy and appropriate technology are perfectly capable of creating a fabricated countryside. Wherever they have been employed on a wide scale and for any length of time, such as in Thailand and in Europe, the natural environment disappears completely and is replaced by a man-made one. To the casual observer this environment may appear natural. But that is only because the observer can't compare it with what it was like several hundred years earlier, before the hand of man reshaped it.

Is there something wrong with a fabricated landscape? Is there something undesirable about converting a wilderness into neat rectangular patches of human-dominated farms and gardens? Not at all. But it is only a value judgment that such an artificial landscape is any more desirable than is a neat and clean urban setting. And not everyone would agree with such a judgment. One is just as artificial as the other, and each has its supporters. It would seem more desirable to allow people a free choice of which kind of artificial landscape they want. But it is absurd to refer to the results of filling a continent with soft energy, appropriate technology farmsteads as "preserving the environment."

De-Industrializing by Free Choice

Much of what the futurists say in support of de-industrialization is simply wrong. There is no need to de-industrialize to protect the environment. In fact, de-industrialization may do at least as much damage to the environment as industrialization has. What is needed to protect the environment is a better definition of property rights in the environment. Ultimately, pollution hurts people, and people must be recognized as having the right not to be victimized by pollution.

Nor does the existence of shifts in the relative scarcity of capital, labor and materials require de-industrialization as such. Our industrial society has reacted to shifts in the relative scarcity of factors of production many times during the past two centuries. It will undoubtedly do so again. What is needed to cope with those shifts is freedom on the part of producers, workers, investors and consumers to make the best choices

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they can, given the relative scarcities they see or forecast.

But if none of the arguments offered by futurists for de-industrialization hold up, does that mean we shouldn't de-industrialize? What about the people who sincerely do choose voluntary simplicity? What about the people who like living in "alternative communities," some of which are quite successful and self-sufficient, rather than depending upon grants and gifts for survival? Doesn't the fact that some people voluntarily abandoned an affluent lifestyle support their argument that there is more to life than the production of wealth? Should they be required to abandon their goals of simplicity and alternatives?

Freedom the Key

Of course not. The key to the whole thing is freedom. In a society which protects people's rights while otherwise letting them alone, each may have his own choice. Those who wish to adopt voluntary simplicity may do so. Those who prefer "un-simple" lives may enjoy as much of the world's material goods as the availability of resources permits. And perhaps most important, those now in *involuntary* simplicity can escape from that state through economic growth. They may then have a choice about whether or not they will live simply.

Thus the most fruitful course for those advocating de-industrialization is to support greater freedom for all. Their goals would be better served by a society in which all are free to make their own choices, subject to the limits imposed by the rights of others and the constraints which result from the scarcity of the world's resources. Attempting to force all of society into any particular mold, whether industrialized or de-industrialized, would be unwise. First, the choice may turn out to be wrong, in which case the future would be much worse than necessary. Second, that would prevent the free search for alternatives which might turn out to be more desirable than any of those which are being debated today. Freedom for themselves and for others will achieve much more than the de-industrializers can hope to achieve through imposing their views on everyone else.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

Ed Lipscomb

FREEDOM rests, and always will, on individual responsibility, individual integrity, individual effort, individual courage, and individual religious faith. It does not rest in Washington. It rests with you and me.

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Henry Hazlitt

"PLANNING" VS. THE FREE MARKET

WHEN WE DISCUSS "economic planning," we must be clear concerning what it is we are talking about. The real question being raised is not: plan or no plan? but *whose* plan?

Each of us, in his private capacity, is constantly planning for the future: what he will do the rest of today, the rest of the week, or on the weekend; what he will do this month or next year. Some of us are planning, though in a more general way, ten or twenty years ahead.

We are making these plans both in our capacity as consumers and as producers. Employees are either planning to stay where they are, or to shift from one job to another, or from one company to another, or from one city to another, or even from one career to another. Entrepreneurs are either planning to stay in one location or to move to another, to expand or contract their operations, to stop making a product for which they think demand is dying and to start making one for which they think demand is going to grow.

Now the people who call themselves "Economic Planners" either ignore or by implication deny all this. They talk as if the world of private enterprise, the free market, supply, demand, and competition, were a world of chaos and anarchy, in which nobody ever planned ahead or looked ahead, but merely drifted or staggered along. I once engaged in a television debate with an eminent Planner in a high official posi-

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Henry Hazlitt, among so many notable accomplishments, is the author of the best-selling and recently revised *Economics in One Lesson.*

At the 1962 meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society in Knokke, Belgium, he delivered an address, " 'Planning' vs. the Free Market," which appeared in *The Freeman* of December 1962. The issue continues to plague the people of many lands, and bears further study today.

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tion who implied that without his forecasts and guidance American business would be "flying blind." At best, the Planners imply, the world of private enterprise is one in which everybody works or plans at cross purposes or makes his plans solely in his "private" interest rather than in the "public" interest.

Now the Planner wants to substitute his *own* plan for the plans of everybody else. At best, he wants the *government* to lay down a Master Plan to which everybody else's plan must be subordinated.

It Involves Compulsion

It is this aspect of Planning to which our attention should be directed: Planning always involves *compulsion*. This may be disguised in various ways. The government Planners will, of course, try to persuade people that the Master Plan has been drawn up for their own good, and that the only persons who are going to be coerced are those whose plans are "not in the public interest."

The Planners will say, in the newly fashionable phraseology, that their plans are not "imperative," but merely "indicative." They will make a great parade of "democracy," freedom, cooperation, and noncompulsion by "consulting all groups"—"Labor," "Industry," the Government, even "Consumers Representatives"—in drawing up the Master Plan and the specific "goals" or "targets." Of course, if they could really succeed in giving everybody his proportionate weight and voice and freedom of choice, if everybody were allowed to pursue the plan of production or consumption of specific goods and services that he had intended to pursue or would have pursued anyway, then the whole Plan would be useless and pointless, a complete waste of energy and time. The Plan would be meaningful only if it forced the production and consumption of *different* things or different quantities of things than a free market would have provided. In short, it would be meaningful only insofar as it put compulsion on *somebody* and forced some change in the pattern of production and consumption.

There are two excuses for this coercion. One is that the free market produces the *wrong* goods, and that only government Planning and direction could assure the production of the "right" ones. This is the thesis popularized by J. K. Galbraith. The other excuse is that the free market does not produce *enough* goods, and that only government Planning could speed things up. This is the thesis of the apostles of "economic growth."

The "Five-Year Plans"

Let us take up the "Galbraith" thesis first. I put his name in quotation marks because the thesis long

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antedates his presentation of it. It is the basis of all the communist "Five-Year Plans" which are now aped by a score of socialist nations. While these Plans may consist in setting out some general "overall" percentage of production increase, their characteristic feature is rather a whole network of specific "targets" for specific industries: there is to be a 25 per cent increase in steel capacity, a 15 per cent increase in cement production, a 12 per cent increase in butter and milk output, and so forth.

There is always a strong bias in these Plans, especially in the communist countries, in favor of heavy industry, because it gives increased power to make war. In all the Plans, however, even in noncommunist countries, there is a strong bias in favor of industrialization, of heavy industry as against agriculture, in the belief that this necessarily increases real income faster and leads to greater national self-sufficiency. It is not an accident that such countries are constantly running into agricultural crises and food famines.

But the Plans also reflect either the implied or explicit moral judgments of the government Planners. The latter seldom plan for an increased production of cigarettes or whisky, or, in fact, for any so-called "luxury" item. The standards are always grim and puritanical. The word "austerity" makes a chronic appearance. Consumers are told that they must "tighten their belts" for a little longer. Sometimes, if the last Plan has not been too unsuccessful, there is a little relaxation: consumers can, perhaps, have a few more motor cars and hospitals and playgrounds. But there is almost never any provision for, say, more golf courses or even bowling alleys. In general, no form of expenditure is approved that cannot be universalized, or at least "majoritized." And such so-called luxury expenditure is discouraged, even in a so-called "indicative" Plan, by not allowing access by promoters of such projects to bank credit or to the capital markets. At some point government coercion or compulsion comes into play.

Austerity Leads to Waste

This disapproval and coercion may rest on several grounds. Nearly all "austerity" programs stem from the belief, not that the person who wants to make a "luxury" expenditure cannot afford it, but that "the nation" cannot afford it. This involves the assumption that, if I set up a bowling alley or patronize one, I am somehow depriving my fellow citizens of more necessary goods or services. This would be true only on the assumption that the proper thing to do is to tax my so-called surplus income away from me and turn it over to others in the form of money, goods, or services. But if I am allowed to keep my "surplus" income, and am

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forbidden to spend it on bowling alleys or on imported wine and cheese, I will spend it on something else that is not forbidden. Thus when the British austerity program after World War II prevented an Englishman from consuming imported luxuries, on the ground that "the nation" could not afford the "foreign exchange" or the "unfavorable balance of payments," officials were shocked to find that the money was being squandered on football pools or dog races. And there is no reason to suppose, in any case, that the "dollar shortage" or the "unfavorable balance of payments" was helped in the least. The austerity program, insofar as it was not enforced by higher income taxes, probably cut down potential exports as much as it did potential imports; and insofar as it was enforced by higher income taxes, it discouraged exports by restricting and discouraging production.

Bureaucratic Choice

But we come now to the specific Galbraith thesis, growing out of the agelong bureaucratic suspicion of luxury spending, that consumers generally do not know how to spend the income they have earned; that they buy whatever advertisers tell them to buy; that consumers are, in short, boobs and suckers, chronically wasting their money on trivialities, if not on absolute junk. The bulk of consumers also, if left to themselves, show atrocious taste, and crave cerise automobiles with ridiculous tailfins.

The natural conclusion from all this—and Galbraith does not hesitate to draw it—is that consumers ought to be deprived of freedom of choice, and that government bureaucrats, full of wisdom—of course, of a very *un*conventional wisdom—should make their consumptive choices for them. The consumers should be supplied, not with what they themselves want, but with what bureaucrats of exquisite taste and culture think is good for them. And the way to do this is to tax away from people all the income they have been foolish enough to earn above that required to meet their bare necessities, and turn it over to the bureaucrats to be spent in ways in which the latter think would really do people the most good—more and better roads and parks and playgrounds and schools and television programs—all supplied, of course, by government.

And here Galbraith resorts to a neat semantic trick. The goods and services for which people voluntarily spend their own money make up, in his vocabulary, the "private sector" of the economy, while the goods and services supplied to them by the government, out of the income it has seized from them in taxes, make up the "public sector." Now the adjec-

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tive "private" carries an aura of the selfish and exclusive, the inward-looking, whereas the adjective "public" carries an aura of the democratic, the shared, the generous, the patriotic, the outward-looking—in brief, the public-spirited. And as the tendency of the expanding welfare state has been, in fact, to take out of private hands and more and more take into its own hands provision of the goods and services that are considered to be most essential and most edifying—roads and water supply, schools and hospitals and scientific research, education, old-age insurance and medical care—the tendency must be increasingly to associate the word "public" with everything that is really necessary and laudable, leaving the "private sector" to be associated merely with the superfluities and capricious wants that are left over after everything that is really important has been taken care of.

If the distinction between the two "sectors" were put in more neutral terms—say, the "private sector" versus the "governmental sector," the scales would not be so heavily weighted in favor of the latter. In fact, this more neutral vocabulary would raise in the mind of the hearer the question whether certain activities now assumed by the modern welfare state do legitimately or appropriately come within the governmental province. For Galbraith's use of the word "sector," "private" or "public," cleverly carries the implication that the public "sector" is legitimately not only whatever the government has already taken over but a great deal besides. Galbraith's whole point is that the "public sector" is "starved" in favor of a "private sector" overstuffed with superfluities and trash.

The Voluntary Way

The true distinction, and the appropriate vocabulary, however, would throw an entirely different light on the matter. What Galbraith calls the "private sector" of the economy is, in fact, the *voluntary* sector; and what he calls the "public sector" is, in fact, the *coercive* sector. The voluntary sector is made up of the goods and services for which people voluntarily spend the money they have earned. The coercive sector is made up of the goods and services that are provided, regardless of the wishes of the individual, out of the taxes that are seized from him. And as this sector grows at the expense of the voluntary sector, we come to the essence of the welfare state. In this state nobody pays for the education of his own children but everybody pays for the education of everybody else's children. Nobody pays his own medical bills, but everybody pays everybody else's medical bills. Nobody helps his own old parents, but everybody else's old parents.

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Nobody provides for the contingency of his own unemployment, his own sickness, his own old age, but everybody provides for the unemployment, sickness, or old age of everybody else. The welfare state, as Bastiat put it with uncanny clairvoyance more than a century ago, is the great fiction by which everybody tries to live at the expense of everybody else.

This is not only a fiction; it is bound to be a failure. This is sure to be the outcome whenever effort is separated from reward. When people who earn more than the average have their "surplus," or the greater part of it, seized from them in taxes, and when people who earn less than the average have the deficiency, or the greater part of it, turned over to them in handouts and doles, the production of all must sharply decline; for the energetic and able lose their incentive to produce more than the average, and the slothful and unskilled lose their incentive to improve their condition.

The Growth Planners

I have spent so much time in analyzing the fallacies of the Galbraithian school of economic Planners that I have left myself little in which to analyze the fallacies of the Growth Planners. Many of their fallacies are the same; but there are some important differences.

The chief difference is that the Galbraithians believe that a free market economy produces too much (though, of course, they are the "wrong" goods), whereas the Growthmen believe that a free market economy does not produce nearly enough. I will not here deal with all the statistical errors, gaps, and fallacies in their arguments, though an analysis of these alone could occupy a fat book. I want to concentrate on their idea that some form of government direction or coercion can by some strange magic increase production above the level that can be achieved when everybody enjoys economic freedom.

For it seems to me self-evident that when people are free, production tends to be, if not maximized, at least optimized. This is because, in a system of free markets and private property, everybody's reward tends to equal the value of his production. What he gets for his production (and is allowed to keep) is in fact what it is worth in the market. If he wants to double his income in a single year, he is free to try—and may succeed if he is able to double his production in a single year. If he is content with the income he has—or if he feels that he can only get more by excessive effort or risk—he is under no pressure to increase his output. In a free market everyone is free to maximize his satisfactions, whether these consist in more leisure or in more goods.

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But along comes the Growth Planner. He finds by statistics (whose trustworthiness and accuracy he never doubts) that the economy has been growing, say, only 2.8 per cent a year. He concludes, in a flash of genius, that a growth rate of 5 per cent a year would be faster!

There is among the Growth Planners a profound mystical belief in the power of words. They declare that they "are not satisfied" with a growth rate of a mere 2.8 per cent a year; they demand a growth rate of 5 per cent a year. And once having spoken, they act as if half the job had already been done. If they did not assume this, it would be impossible to explain the deep earnestness with which they argue among themselves whether the growth rate "ought" to be 4 or 5 or 6 per cent. (The only thing they always agree on is that it ought to be greater than whatever it actually is.) Having decided on this magic overall figure, they then proceed either to set specific targets for specific goods (and here they are at one with the Russian Five-Year Planners) or to announce some general recipe for reaching the overall rate.

But why do they assume that setting their magic target rate will increase the rate of production over the existing one? And how is their growth rate supposed to apply as far as the individual is concerned? Is the man who is already making $50,000 a year to be coerced into working for an income of $52,500 next year? Is the man who is making only $5,000 a year to be forbidden to make more than $5,250 next year? If not, what is gained by making a specific "annual growth rate" a governmental "target"? Why not just permit or encourage everybody to do his best, or make his own decision, and let the average "growth" be whatever it turns out to be?

The way to get a maximum rate of "economic growth"—assuming this to be our aim—is to give maximum encouragement to production, employment, saving, and investment. And the way to do this is to maintain a free market and a sound currency. It is to encourage profits, which must in turn encourage both investment and employment. It is to refrain from oppressive taxation that siphons away the funds that would otherwise be available for investment. It is to allow free wage rates that permit and encourage full employment. It is to allow free interest rates, which would tend to maximize saving and investment.

The Wrong Policies

The way to *slow down* the rate of economic growth is, of course, precisely the opposite of this. It is to discourage production, employment, saving, and investment by incessant interventions, controls, threats, and harassment. It is to frown upon prof-

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its, to declare that they are excessive, to file constant antitrust suits, to control prices by law or by threats, to levy confiscatory taxes that discourage new investment and siphon off the funds that make investment possible, to hold down interest rates artificially to the point where real saving is discouraged and malinvestment encouraged, to deprive employers of genuine freedom of bargaining, to grant excessive immunities and privileges to labor unions so that their demands are chronically excessive and chronically threaten unemployment—and then to try to offset all these policies by government spending, deficits, and monetary inflation. But I have just described precisely the policies that most of the fanatical Growthmen advocate.

Their recipe for inducing growth always turns out to be—inflation. This does lead to the *illusion* of growth, which is measured in their statistics in monetary terms. What the Growthmen do not realize is that the magic of inflation is always a short-run magic, and quickly played out. It can work temporarily and under special conditions—when it causes prices to rise faster than wages and so restores or expands profit margins. But this can happen only in the early stages of an inflation which is not expected to continue. And it can happen even then only because of the temporary acquiescence or passivity of the labor union leaders. The consequences of this short-lived paradise are malinvestment, waste, a wanton redistribution of wealth and income, the growth of speculation and gambling, immorality and corruption, social resentment, discontent and upheaval, disillusion, bankruptcy, increased governmental controls, and eventual collapse. This year's euphoria becomes next year's hangover. Sound long-run growth is always retarded.

In Spite of "The Plan"

Before closing, I should like to deal with at least one statistical argument in favor of government Planning. This is that Planning has actually succeeded in promoting growth, and that this can be statistically proved. In reply I should like to quote from an article on economic planning in the *Survey* published by the Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York in its issue of June 1962:

> There is no way to be sure how much credit is due the French plans in themselves for that country's impressive 4½ per cent average annual growth rate over the past decade. Other factors were working in favor of growth: a relatively low starting level after the wartime destruction, Marshall Plan funds in the early years, later an ample labor supply siphonable from agriculture and from obsolete or inefficient industries, most

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recently the bracing air of foreign competition let in by liberalization of import restrictions, the general dynamism of the Common Market, the break-through of the consumer as a source of demand. For the fact that France today has a high degree of stability and a strong currency along with its growth, the stern fiscal discipline applied after the devaluation of late 1958 must be held principally responsible.

That a plan is fulfilled, in other words, does not prove that the same or better results could not have been achieved with a lesser degree of central guidance. Any judgment as to cause and effect, of course, must also consider the cases of West Germany and Italy, which have sustained high growth rates without national planning of the economy.

In brief, statistical estimates of growth rates, even if we could accept them as meaningful and accurate, are the result of so many factors that it is never possible to ascribe them with confidence to any single cause. Ultimately we must fall back upon an a priori conclusion, yet a conclusion that is confirmed by the whole range of human experience: that when each of us is free to work out his own economic destiny, within the framework of the market economy, the institution of private property, and the general rule of law, we will all improve our economic condition much faster than when we are ordered around by bureaucrats.

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

The Free Price Mechanism

THIS powerful master of all capitalists who co-ordinates their production, and in fact plans their whole economy, is none other than the people themselves who exercise their power by means of the free price mechanism, which is the most efficient instrument for directing and planning an economy that has yet been devised. The production and investment of the apparently independent capitalists are directed by the rise and fall of the prices of commodities and services. A movement of prices will tell producers far quicker than can any state economic planner what their masters, the consumers, want them to produce and where to invest their capital. The free price mechanism, by preventing waste and by giving swift directions to capitalists, which must be obeyed on pain of bankruptcy, has made the multiple economy the most efficient system for supplying the wants of the people that the world has ever known.

GEORGE WINDER, "Centralized or Multiple Economies"

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John O. Nelson

Adversary Unionism

I should not want to maintain that all unionism is or has been adversary in character. In the past, the unionism of company unions perhaps was not, nor the unionism of the medieval guilds. It may be that Japanese unionism is not. It may be that Russian soviet unionism is not. I shall refer only to Western, "free world" unionism, especially as represented by unionism in the United States.

With those limitations understood, I think it is largely a truism that contemporary unionism is adversary in character and is so recognized to be, not only in the peculiar structure of the various laws (Wagner Act, Taft-Hartley Act) and governmental decrees (NLRB decisions) covering the subject but in the minds of laymen, employers, union members and union leaders alike. Thus, there had to appear something contradictory in the recent election of United Auto Workers President Douglas A. Fraser to Chrysler's Board of Directors but not in his statement that his new role would "not alter the traditional adversary relationship between the UAW and the auto companies" (UPI, 5/14/80).

The term "adversary" signifies "having an opposing party." As the adjective "adversary" is applied in contemporary references to unions by union leaders, the constitution of unions, those dealing in government with unions, labor relations theorists, and so on, Marxian and related ideologies often play a significant role. The notion of "opposing party" is pretty much merged with that of "enemy." Thus, typically, a union conceives and represents itself as protecting and defending the rights and interests of employees and the

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same as being necessarily threatened and attacked by employers. It is, for instance, on the ground that employers are intrinsically the enemy of the worker that unions not only justify their existence but the various coercive and war-like practices that they everywhere engage in: forced membership, strikes, the use of goon squads, and so on.

Constitutional Rights Violated

It is on the same ground, with the added one that employers are in a position of unfair strength, that twentieth century legislation has consistently violated and shelved such basic constitutional rights of employers as those of contracting with whom they please and free speech. Employers, for example, are disallowed by law from saying what they think of unionism to their employees.

We should not, therefore, be unreasonable in describing contemporary unionism as being "essentially" adversary in character, where "adversary" is to be understood in some such strong sense as, for instance, "enemy-related," and "essentially" in its strict philosophic sense. For suppose contemporary unionism divested itself in act and thought of the claim that the relationship between employer and employee was "enemy-related," it should simply not be recognizable as itself.

For our present purposes, however, we need not insist on the whole truth. It will suffice to treat the "adversary relation" defining contemporary unionism in terms merely of "intrinsically opposed", i.e., in objectives, in interests. I can imagine no defender of contemporary unionism either wanting or being able to disagree with this version of the adversary relation.

Given this very weak interpretation of "adversary relation," which hardly does justice to the fierce actualities, I intend to place unionism upon two scales: one measuring the legal coherency of unionism and the other its moral coherency. Somewhat arbitrarily, I shall weigh in the first scale the unionization of government employees and in the second the unionization of private employees (meaning by this: the employees of private enterprises). Probably the two scales could be switched around, though I do believe that the present distribution of scales and weighings has a certain natural appropriateness that will become apparent.

The Unionization of Government Employees

One is vaguely aware that something perverse is going on when municipal, state, or federal employees strike; garbage piles up high; mail is not delivered (during the first Canadian postal strike one even saw mail being burned in the streets of

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Montreal by postal employees); firemen refuse to put out fires (or even set them themselves), and so on. The feeling is justifiably present that one is like a person who has been bound and gagged and while helplessly prostrate is assaulted with legal immunity. For whatever the laws themselves may say, it is a commonplace of the contemporary scene that these terrifying activities of government employee unions take place and are allowed to take place.

When the strike that happens to be aggrieving one has ended one's natural inclination is to suppose that everything has returned to a happy state of normalcy. One says, "The unions sometimes go to extremes. There ought to be laws against government employees striking [but there already are]. Then everything will be O.K."

It seems to be seldom realized that as long as government employees may legally band together under the adversary relation of contemporary unionism such grievous violence is bound to take place. For laws to declare both that governmental employees may unionize (I shall consistently use this term in its present connotations) and that they may not strike or employ goon squads or other supplementary violence amounts at one and the same time to sanctioning the view that government employees are a class of persons needing protection against an unfair, stronger party opposed to them (hence the right to coercively organize, to coercively collectively bargain, and the like) and that they may not take certain other coercive action, e.g., strikes, use of goon squads, and so on, necessary to effectuate their protection against that unfair, stronger party which opposes them.

Naturally enough, this incoherent injunction is rejected with a clear conscience by union members and leadership and not insisted on by the public. Even third party arbitration will seem to offer no effective alternative, unless it is not really third party at all but safely committed to the union side. For in the economic realm there can really be no true third party: there exist but employees and employers. Thus the simple truth is: if government employees are legally entitled to unionize they are entitled to strike, to use goon squads, and so on. This is a practical tautology and in the last analysis everyone recognizes it as such.

Who Is the Employer?

What is not often enough or seriously enough considered is the claim that government employees have a legal right to unionize. But just here the most serious question is in order. For what the adversary principle which underlies and sanctions this unionization dictates is that the

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employer of government employees is an opposing and even inimical party. But who is the employer? In a republican form of government like our own the sovereign is the people. The school boards, legislatures, city councils, executive officers, courts, various bureaus of government that nominally do the hiring are agents of the sovereign people; thus, they are not the true employer; the sovereign people are (as when I purchase a house through an intermediary I am the true purchaser, not the intermediary). It follows from the adversary principle, therefore, that unionized government employees must be conceived and conceive themselves as being opposed by the sovereign people and consequently themselves as opposing and being aligned against the sovereign people.

Now it is simple legal nonsense to suppose that the agents of a sovereign should be entitled to hire as employees of the sovereign persons opposed by definition and dedication to him. It is compound nonsense to suppose that any group under a sovereign is legally entitled to align itself, much less employ force, against the sovereign. Only another sovereign can claim such a power.

In sanctioning the unionization of government employees, then, legislatures, courts, executive branches of government, and the like either engage in the legal absurdity of sanctioning subjects of the sovereign of which they are the agents in aligning themselves, and even using force, against that same sovereign or they in effect set up a sovereign independent of the sovereign whom they represent which is aligned by definition and dedication against him. In either case, the representatives or agents of the sovereign people do what they cannot legally do: they betray the client whom they represent; and since this is their sovereign, they in effect engage in treason; for in its broad, general sense "treason" denotes a breach of allegiance to one's sovereign.

An Illogical Position

As for the unionized employees of government themselves—I mean those who voluntarily unionize—they too do what they legally cannot do. In aligning themselves against their sovereign they assume the role of independent sovereigns. Indeed, in levying the sorts of demands that they customarily do, saying that unless this or that exaction be granted they will cut off this or that public service, they act as if they were the rulers of their sovereign. Thus, their actions and professions are the reverse side of the legal nonsense engaged in by legislatures and courts that sanction the unionization of government employees. Nor can it convincingly be objected that the sovereign or people have granted

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their employees these rights and powers by virtue of the fact that those legislatures and courts are their agents. For in a republican form of government the people cannot alienate their own sovereignty.

But shall we want, then, to maintain that unionized government employees engage, like those who sanction their unionization, in treason? One is, I admit, disinclined to render such a harsh verdict. Certainly, for instance, we do not want to say that anarchists and others who oppose the government or the very existence of government are necessarily engaged in treason. And there is some good reason for our not wanting to. The basis of government in a Republic is presumed to be consent of the governed. Presumably, therefore, a person who refuses to give his assent to be governed—say, an anarchist—is not really the subject of a sovereign. Thus, though he may engage in war against our sovereign he cannot be said to be engaged in treason, since our sovereign is not *his* sovereign.

Actually, however, the case of the anarchist and the case of the unionized government employee are entirely different. The anarchist does not in theory and need not in practice avow himself a subject of any sovereign. The unionized government employee in a Republic, and in this argument I am limiting reference to sovereignty under a Republic, cannot possibly claim that he has not avowed himself a subject of the people's sovereignty. He did so when he claimed, as a citizen, the right to unionize. He did so when he voted to unionize and claimed that his vote had a certain status under law. He did so when he hired himself out, under the status of being a citizen, to the government. *One cannot have one's cake and eat it too!*

Thus, a first impression to the contrary notwithstanding, the unionized government employee—again, I mean the employee who has voluntarily unionized—is, just as much as the legislatures and courts that sanctioned his unionization, engaged in a breach of allegiance to his sovereign and therefore, strictly speaking, in treason. But it is, on the face of it, legally incoherent for anyone to claim to have the right to engage in treason. Thus, on all counts, the unionization of government employees has to be legally incoherent.

The Unionization of Private Employees

The common moral and legal objection to the unionization of private employees is that it abrogates the individual's moral and constitutional rights of contract. And patently that is true. It would remain true, moreover, even if unions did not allow themselves the use of strikes, goon squads, and other sup-

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plementary violence. Their very subscription to coercive membership and coercive collective bargaining (can there be any other species of it?) is both in fact and in intent an abrogation of the right of individual contract.

Persons today are so inured, however, to constitutional and moral breaches of the right of contract by all agencies of government, and in particular its courts, it hardly excites even the batting of an eye to note another occurrence of it. In addition, it has always been recognized that there are certain things that one cannot legally or morally contract; for example, the commission of a crime. With a seeming legitimacy, therefore, government can always make it appear that a restriction upon individual contract is justified by making a certain action illegal.

To be sure, in many such cases a cart is being put before the horse. Mere statutory law is being allowed to in effect amend the constitution and determine constitutional law. It is not, though, always easy to determine just when this switch of cart and horse has taken place. Imperceptibly, merely eccentric viewpoints harden into moral standpoints and then it may seem that a new restriction upon individual contract is the cart following the horse: that it has been dictated by a more privileged concern.

It is my impression, consequently, that attempting to rest the case against the unionization of private employees upon the right of individual contract is not likely to have much success. But even if the attempt were to succeed it seems to me that an attack from our previous direction must be much more conclusive. To be sure, questions of sovereignty and treason are not involved in the unionization of private employees. But the adversary principle is, and once again we shall find it creating insupportable incoherencies, though these will now prove to be more moral than legal in character.

How Government Intervenes

The unionization of private employees rests upon the sanction of society and government. These decree that certain conditions having been met—a majority vote of the employees, for example—the employer is required to accept the unionization of his "shop." If he were not required by law to do so and if he were protected by law and government or even society in his refusal to do so his employees would obviously not be unionized. The fact that employers are forced by government and law to accept and hire unionized workers is what we want to keep our eye on.

Now, we have already seen that unionization is based on the adver-

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sary principle. Once, then, an employer's working force is unionized we have a body of employees whose aims and interests are conceived as being intrinsically opposed to those of the employer. Even if he is not conceived to be their enemy (and typically he is by union leadership and union principle) he is conceived to be their opponent and vice versa.

As an illustration of the rational absurdity of this enforced condition, suppose that when one hired a certain lawyer to defend one in a suit the lawyer publicly represented himself as having interests and aims opposed to one's own in the suit and acted accordingly. Clearly he would be guilty of malpractice and certainly one should want to dismiss him. Imagine, then, that one could not; that one was forced by law and government to retain and use this lawyer who avowedly conceived his interest and aims to be opposed to one's own and who was acting accordingly! This would be tantamount to forcing a person to sanction his own self-destruction. It would not only constitute the crime of using the law and agencies of an innocent person's own government to injure him but the completely unnatural indignity of making him lend a hand in his own injury. Visibly, this would be a piece of immorality in its most detestable form.

Now the employer who is forced to accept the unionization of his workers is in precisely the same position as the client who is forced to retain a lawyer who is avowedly and in fact pursuing interests and aims opposed to his own. In so forcing him the employer's own government is not only injuring him but forcing him to lend a hand to his own injury. We might add that it is not only government which is guilty of monstrous injustice and immorality in this case but all the employees who are voluntary parties to the unionization in question. They are active and knowing parties to the crime. They would be more honest and excusable if they simply conducted a lynching.

It will be retorted, no doubt: "But the truth is that the employer and employees' interests and aims are opposed. Unionization simply takes account of this fact." But that is wrong. An employer and employee's interests and aims are no more opposed than a client's and his lawyer's. When a lawyer hires out to a client it is mutually understood that while engaged in working for the client the client's interest is the lawyer's.

When a person hires out to any employer it rationally has to be his understanding that, while at work, the employer's interest is his interest. To the objection that the employer wants to pay the employee as little as possible and the employee wants to be paid as much as possible we should want to point out that

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what we have here is a theoretical picture of hiring phenomena which is based upon a view of persons which conceives of them as economic computing machines: a far cry from actual persons! But even were this in actual practice the case, it would not invalidate the claim that the only moral and reasonable relation obtaining between employer and employee is one in which, for a certain recompense, the latter makes the interests of the former temporarily his own.

Conclusion

If we have been correct in our reasoning, the unionization of government employees stands as sheer legal depravity and the unionization of private employees as sheer moral depravity. In both cases rational incoherency is foisted upon a society of potentially moral and law-abiding individuals and upon some of their most basic inter-relationships. It is no wonder at all, therefore, that in whatever society adversary unionization exists or is allowed to exist that society visibly sickens in proportion as unionization spreads and that pride of work, self-esteem, and production decline in tandem.

What seems to be too little recognized is that while unionization's adversary—whether the public or the private employer—suffers greatly, no one suffers quite such injury and hemorrhage as the unionized employee himself. We may, I think, state it as an inexorable fact that no unionized employee can be content with his work or with himself. We may, I think, state it as an inexorable fact, everywhere confirmed, that he has to find gaining a livelihood changed from a challenge and adventure and accomplishment into a drudgery as meaningless and vexatious as slavery. This has to be, for in the same way that legal incoherency makes whatever it touches difficult and unpleasant so must moral incoherency.

William Henry Chamberlin

IDEAS ON LIBERTY

THE STATUS of the medieval robber barons depended on their ability to deport themselves as above the law; and this is equally true as regards their modern successors. The rule of law, the conception that no one may do what is legally forbidden to others, is part of the fabric of a free society. But, where trade unions as organizations or their leaders and agents as individuals are concerned, this rule is more often broken than observed.

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Continuing Education

IF it weren't for what Henry Hazlitt calls the autodidacts we'd be in a bad way. Tom Bethell, writing in the twenty-fifth anniversary issue of *National Review,* lists some academically trained fathers of the supposedly new supply-side economic theory, but if it hadn't been for two self-taught women, Isabel Paterson of *The God of the Machine* and Rose Wilder Lane of *The Discovery of Freedom,* some of us would never have been prepared for the Gospel According to Jack Kemp.

Henry Hazlitt traces his own enlightenment to encountering a book by Philip Wicksteed, whose marginal utility theory as of 1911 coincided with what Menger and the "Austrians" were teaching. Leonard Read went to school, but it was Bill Mullendore of the Southern California Edison Company who first made him conscious that there was a lot of what John T. Flynn called "Chamber of Commerce Fascism" in General "Iron Pants" Johnson's National Recovery Administration. The point is that we learn when we learn, and formal schooling often has little to do with it.

Ronald Gross has developed this insight in a book which is offered as a self-help "open sesame" to what he calls the "Invisible University." The title of the book is, appropriately, *The Lifelong Learner.* The book is spotted with examples of what autodidacts have accomplished merely by making use of odd moments to pursue hobbies.

There is Cornelius Hirschberg, for instance, who put in some 20,000 hours reading on subways, trains,

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buses and during lunch time over a period of forty years. I find it hard to think Mr. Hirschberg could have worked his way through the first fifty-nine theorems of the *Principia Mathematica* on the subway, or that he could carry enough dictionaries and critiques at rush hours to master Dante's *Inferno* in the Italian. But then, the New York subways were not always the shambles they have become since Mayor La Guardia's passing, and I myself remember reading the three volumes of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* on trips to the Bronx and outermost Brooklyn when I was a cub on the *New York Times*.

The Lifelong Learner by Ronald Gross. Published by Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N. Y. 10020. 190 pages, $8.95 cloth.

Mr. Gross' "invisible university" includes libraries, adult education courses, settlement houses, museums, churches, tape cassettes, correspondence schools, educational TV and learning exchanges as well as subway trains. A man named William Glasser helped him to work out the implications of his self-help theory by writing a book called *Positive Addiction*. When George "Shotgun" Shuba, the old Brooklyn Dodger outfielder, said his "natural swing" was developed by swinging a weighted bat six hundred times every day of his life, Mr. Gross knew he had something better than marijuana to cultivate both interest and happiness. The "positive addict" has his own way of getting a "high," and if he learns something substantial in the process so much the better.

Corroborating Evidence

As if to prove everything that Mr. Gross has to say about self-help, Mortimer Smith offers the story of his adolescence, *My School the City: A Memoir of New York in the Twenties*. I had known Mr. Smith as one of the founders of the Council for Basic Education, and had always assumed that his reasoned opposition to sloppy "look and say" methods of teaching reading derived from his own academic experiences. But now it turns out that Mr. Smith was a school drop-out at the age of fifteen. How he eluded the truant officer constitutes a minor miracle, but from 1921 on through the rest of the ebullient decade of the Twenties Mr. Smith was entirely on his own. He had never heard of any "invisible university." But New York City—in particular Manhattan Island—did for him what Yale and Harvard often failed to do for many of Mortimer Smith's contemporaries.

In a way Mortimer Smith lucked

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into the beginnings of a literary education. Answering an advertisement in the *New York Times* or the *New York World* (he can't remember which), the fifteen-year-old Smith, still wearing short pants, got a job as an office boy for Bob Davis, who ran a literary agency in between writing for himself. (In later years Davis did a column for the *New York Sun* called "Bob Davis Recalls.") Part of Smith's first job was delivering manuscripts to publishers. Often his destination was Street and Smith on Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street, where Theodore Dreiser had learned to divide over-long scripts into two. Inventing a new beginning for the second half and a new ending for the first, Dreiser often doubled Street and Smith's output.

My School the City: A Memoir of New York in the Twenties by Mortimer Smith. Published by Regnery-Gateway, Inc., Suite 300, 116 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60603. 190 pages, $9.95 cloth.

Mr. Smith was negatively impressed with the motto of Dreiser's employer, Mr. Ormand G. Smith (no relation). The motto was "the worse the swill the better you can sell it." Mortimer Smith's own critical awareness was developed by his trips to the lively *Smart Set* offices at 25 West Forty-fifth Street, where H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan upheld the "point of view of the civilized minority." *The Smart Set,* a forerunner of *The American Mercury,* presented such writers as James Joyce, Ezra Pound, Eugene O'Neill, Sherwood Anderson and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Reading *The Smart Set,* the young Mortimer Smith could see that Mencken and Nathan had something better than Street and Smith's Nick Carter stories. But the real change in the young Mortimer Smith's reading tastes came when someone in the offices of Alfred Knopf game him a copy of Floyd Dell's *Moon Calf.* This book, about the out-of-school novitiate of Felix Fay, helped to "mark the beginning of literary discrimination" for Bob Davis' office boy, making him "realize that the true novel is peopled by recognizable human beings."

Mr. Smith had no "generation gap" at home. His father, a civil engineer with the municipal government, let him make decisions for himself. When he decided to use a lingering stomach complaint as an excuse to quit school entirely after his graduation from grammar school, the elder Smiths let him get away with it. The fifteen-year-old Mortimer did attend a few evening sessions at a Continuation School, but when they tried to force ten-finger typing on

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him he rebelled. He was already an accomplished hunt-and-peck artist. Technically he remains a fugitive from school, never brought to trial for violating the education laws of the State of New York.

When he took a job with a firm on Union Square that sold expensive linens, velvets and brocades, Mortimer Smith lost his daily contacts with the literati. But he continued to roam Manhattan's streets in his spare time. He learned to spot the best neo-Renaissance buildings of McKim, Mead and White, and is happy to know that the White designs are still extant in the Villard houses, the General Post Office, and the Century, Harvard, Lambs and Metropolitan clubs.

Mr. Smith remembers with gratitude that Scribner's bookstore on Fifth Avenue never objected to loitering. He was not a museum goer, but he loved the libraries. He went through *War and Peace* and *The Brothers Karamazov* on long subway rides. The Op. Ed. page of the *New York World,* where Franklin P. Adams (The Conning Tower column), Heywood Broun, Alexander Woollcott (drama criticism), Deems Taylor (music) and Laurence Stallings and Harry Hansen (books) held forth, was a continuing education.

When it came to "things spiritual" Mr. Smith, an eclectic, tried all the churches. He didn't like Ethical Culture, but he found much nourishment (albeit of a secular nature) at the Community Church of the Reverend John Haynes Holmes.

Probably because I spent the latter half of the Nineteen Twenties repeating Mr. Smith's Manhattan experiences, I loved his book. It has "the feel of the rock," including the rock on which Manhattan is built, and it certainly backs up everything that Mr. Gross has to say in *The Lifelong Learner.*

THE BIRTH OF A TRANSFER SOCIETY
by Terry L. Anderson and Peter J. Hill
Foreword by James M. Buchanan
(The Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, Stanford, California)
114 pages ■ $6.95 paperback

Reviewed by Roger Ream

WHEN the framers of the Constitution set out to draft a document that would "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity," they realized that government could easily become the chief threat to that liberty. Since two key requirements for liberty are the security of private property and the sanctity of contracts, specific provisions were included in the Constitution to protect property and contracts from government infringement. Today, these Constitutional provisions are al-

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most meaningless, as government has become the vehicle for massive redistribution of wealth.

This book takes the reader on a journey through American history in search of the causes of the birth of the transfer society. The authors examine court decisions which eroded the constitutional barriers to government violations of economic freedom. The book is an informative, clearly written and documented account of how we went from a government of laws (which protected property and contracts) to a government of men. The authors undertake a case-by-case review, demonstrating that "two centuries of interpretation [by the courts] have eliminated whatever distinction" once existed between the protective function of the state and transfer activity. "Case after case came before the courts challenging the constitutionality of transfer activity. Not surprisingly, some courts were eventually convinced that this activity was appropriate for government." Specifically, it was the case of *Munn* v. *Illinois* (1877) that opened the door.

The *Munn* case involved the power of the Illinois state legislature to set grain storage rates for elevators. Legislatures in midwestern states, influenced by the agrarian Granger movement, enacted laws aimed at regulating the rates of railroads and other "public" utilities. Legal counsel for the affected enterprises argued that such laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause, the commerce and contract clauses, and property rights. "The court's March 1, 1877, decision on *Munn* and other *Granger Cases* surprised those who were sure that such regulation would be found unconstitutional." An excerpt from the majority opinion, written by Chief Justice Morrison Waite, illustrates the statist nature of this decision: "When, therefore, one devotes his property to a use in which the public has an interest, he in effect, grants to the public an interest in that use, and must submit to be controlled by the public for the common good, to the extent of the interest he has thus created" (94 U.S. 126). The authors claim that "[w]ith the *Munn* decision . . . the door for transfer activity at the federal level was thrown open as the court legitimized governmental regulation of private property."

In order to understand *Munn* v. *Illinois,* the majority decision must be viewed in the context of shifts in public opinion. *Munn* v. *Illinois* diverged from past court decisions and provided a precedent for future assaults on economic freedom because it was based on new political, economic, and social theories that were gaining adherents. The authors cite several shifts in thinking which influenced the courts.

First, society underwent a transi-

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tion from a predominantly agrarian to an industrial society. This, in turn, caused changes in the distribution of wealth. In the early years of the country, "increases in income were seen as a measure of one's social contribution rather than as evidence of venality. However, the rising tide of egalitarianism during the Jacksonian era meant that, in the eyes of some, any gain by one person had to be at the expense of another." Some individuals, especially farmers and those whose wealth or position were threatened, viewed government as an appropriate means to maintain or enhance their economic status.

Another shift which occurred was the expansion of the franchise. This ". . . increased [the] reliance on majority rule [and] was not conducive to a continuation of a society living under a government restricted by constitutional limits. The problem lay in the confusion between expansion of the franchise to include a wider spectrum of society and the belief that a simple majority had the right to make all decisions. . . . But allowing majority rule to dictate any changes in the rules of the game desired by a majority opened the door for the tyranny so feared by [James] Madison." This change, coupled with "[a]n explicit faith in the goodness of man and human progress made government seem much more a vehicle of social reform than a potential agent of oppression." It presaged court decisions which would erode constitutional limitations on governmental power.

We are currently in the midst of a change in the political and economic thinking of our country's leaders. Attempts are being made to slow the growth of government spending. However, the basic belief that the redistribution of wealth is a proper function of government remains intact. The support for current efforts to slow the growth of government is not based on a constitutional or ethical questioning of whether the state should properly be involved in transfer activities. Until these basic objections are raised, the infringement of both political and economic freedoms by government will continue.

This book makes a strong case for "the necessity of basic rules to limit wasteful transfer activity and the importance of ideas regarding limits on government. A formal agreement on the fundamental rights of the members of society is essential to an orderly, productive society. . . . [However, a] people's concept of the appropriate role of the coercive powers of government is crucially important in determining the path society takes."

This book can make a significant contribution to the shaping of a new "people's concept" provided it gets the attention it deserves.

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IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Any idea becomes our own as we are exposed to it and accept it and practice it and can explain it to friends—all done without coercion.

This pretty well describes the activities of FEE—seeking, practicing, sharing ideas on liberty, that liberty which Lord Acton identified as "the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and majorities, custom and opinion." If you'd care to join in pursuit of such ideas and ideals, just use the form below to reserve your place on **The Freeman** mailing list.

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